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BUSINESS TRAVELER

US EDITION

February 2025

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CUISINE

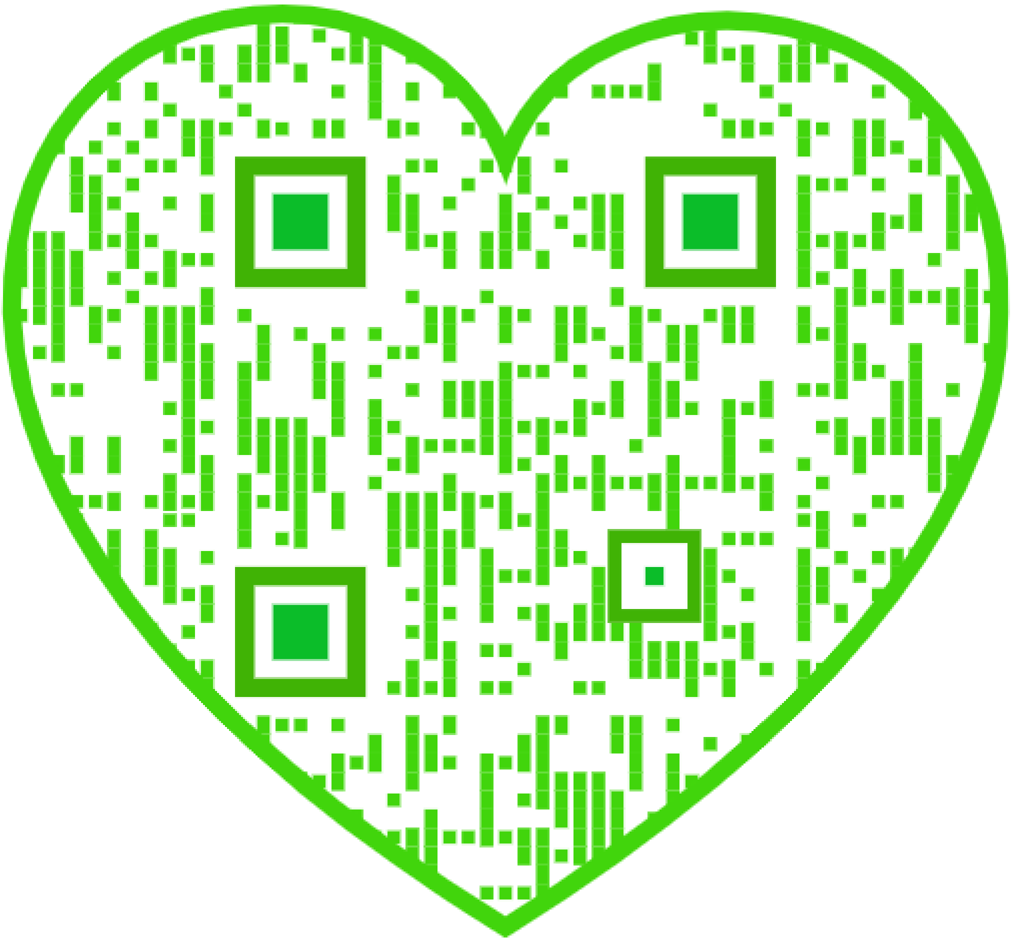
AMERICA'S TASTIEST FOOD FESTIVAL

TRAVEL

THE CARIBBEAN SHINES AS A CORPORATE DESTINATION

PEAK PERFORMANCE

HOW EGOT LEGEND JENNIFER HUDSON LEADS THE WAY IN BUSINESS, PHILANTHROPY AND THE ARTS



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CONTENTS

FEBRUARY 2025

Features

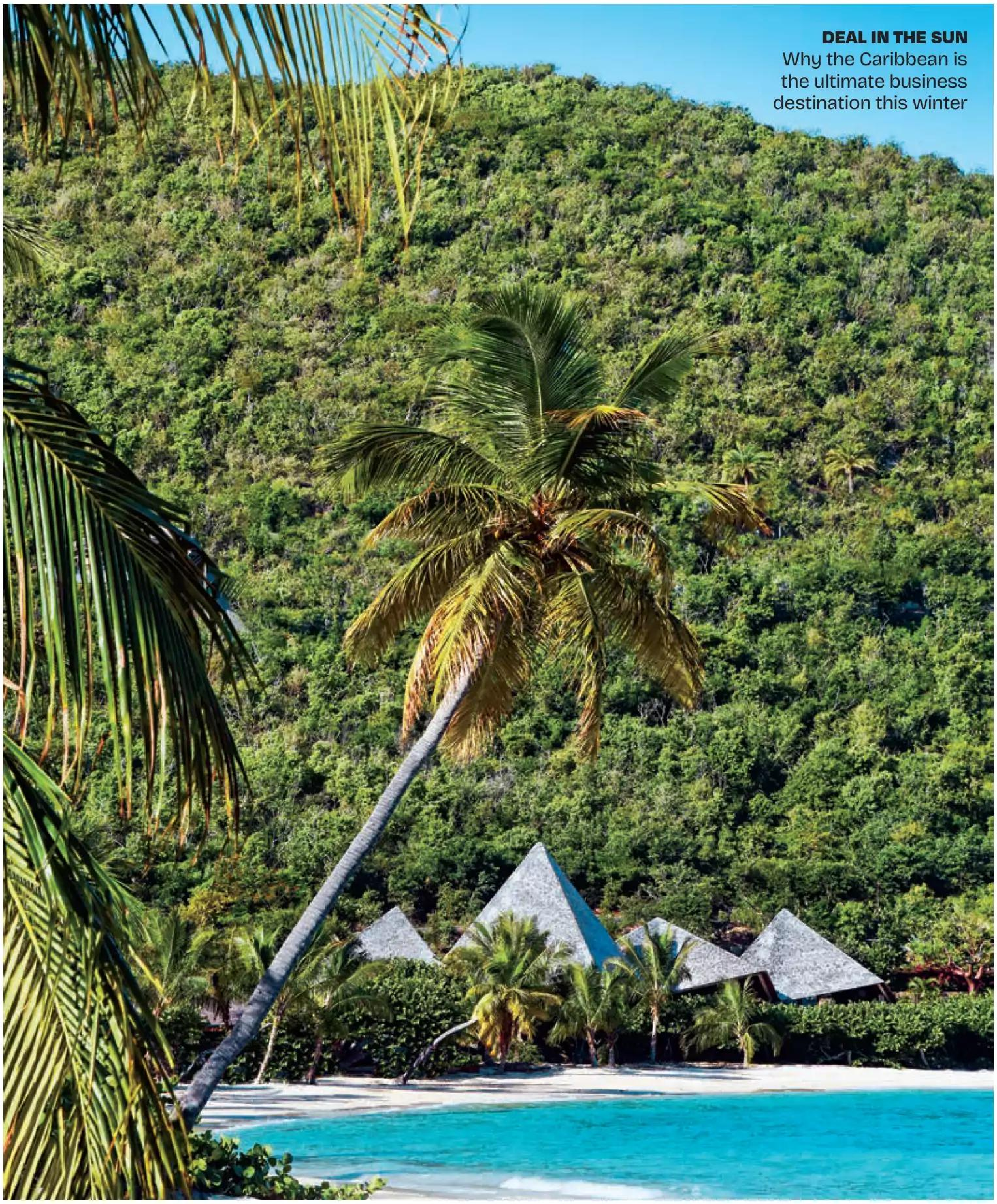
48

Dream Weaver
EGOT winner and entrepreneur Jennifer Hudson on giving back, creating connection and making the best of every moment

54

Well Wishes
Increasingly, business travelers are looking to sustain healthy habits on the road—and airlines, destinations and employers are helping them

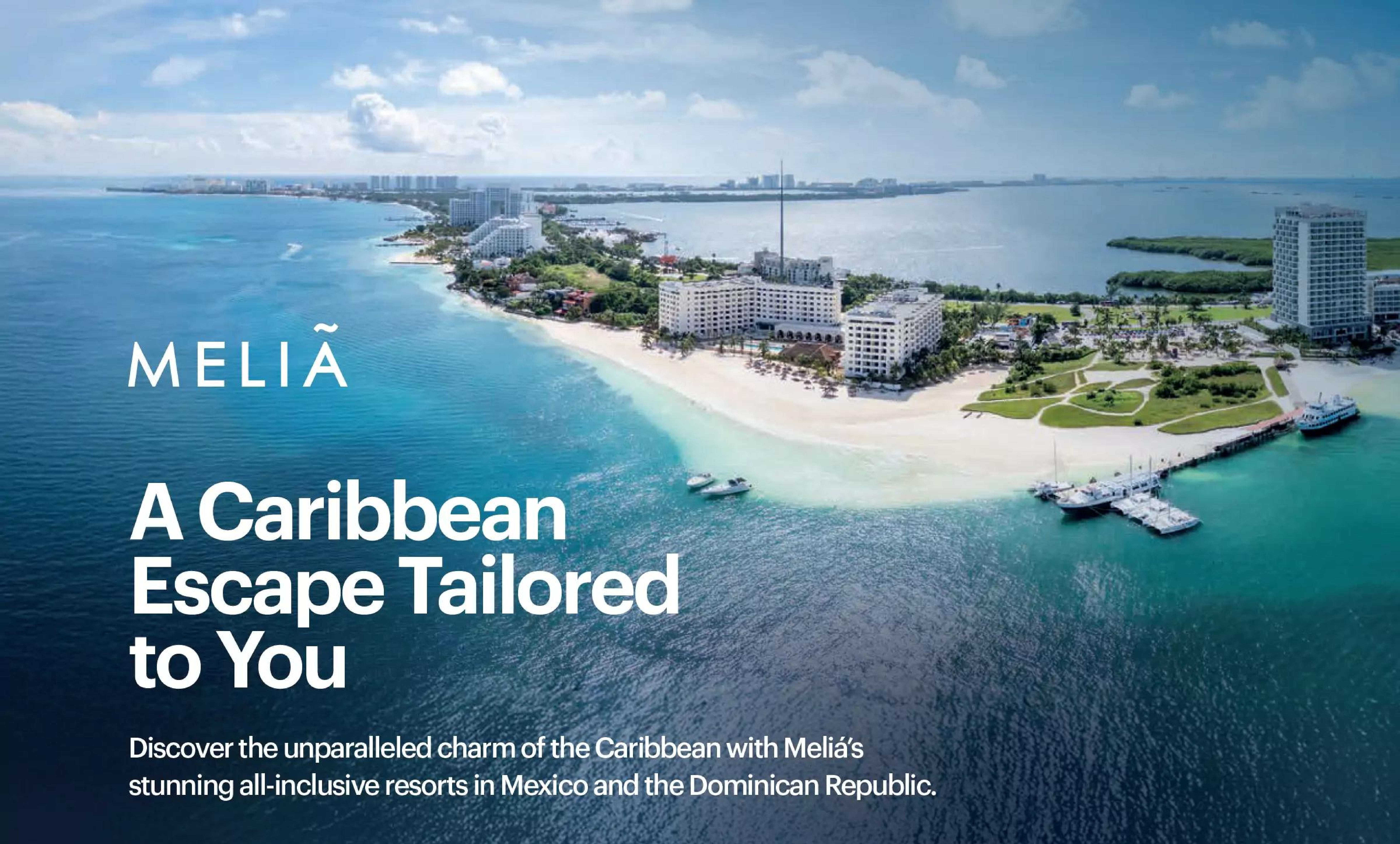
58



DEAL IN THE SUN
Why the Caribbean is the ultimate business destination this winter

IMAGES **KEN HAYDEN PHOTOGRAPHY**

From luxe boardrooms and private catamarans to intimate poolside dinners, the Caribbean offers a bounty of pleasures for top corporate getaways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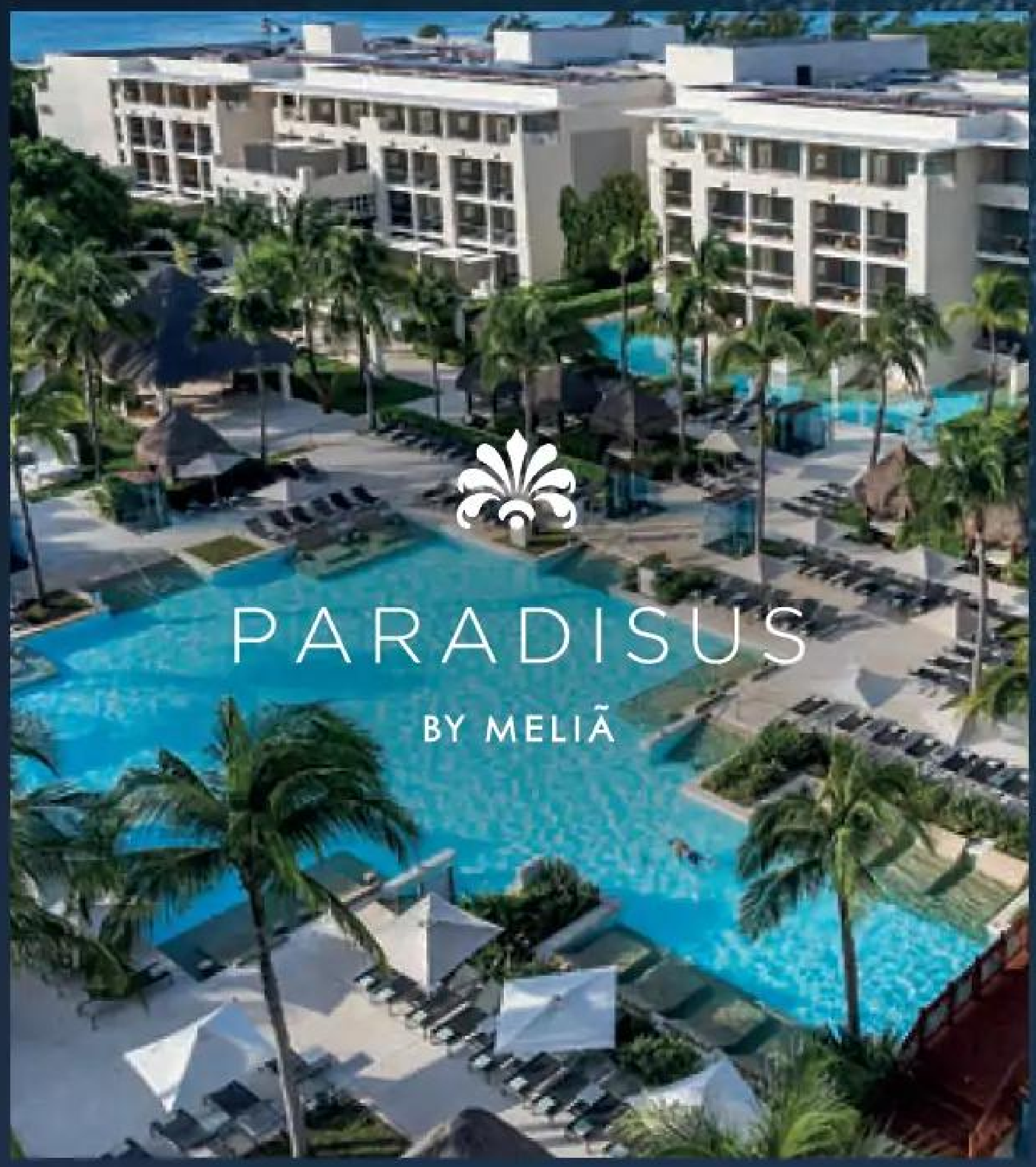

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BUSINESS TRAVELER

CONTENTS

FEBRUARY 2025

Memos

13
▸▸ Sister cities across state lines ▸▸ Alaska Airlines heads to Asia, and Iberia launches a transatlantic narrow-body route ▸▸ Apple upgrades the AirTag ▸▸ Capital One Landing partners with chef José Andrés ▸▸ charms inspired by travel ▸▸ trends in sustainability

Keynote

26
◖ Catching up with food festival luminary Lee Schrager ◖ the importance of a trusted assistant ◖ the benefits—and pitfalls—of third-party travel portals

Bright Ideas

33
◆ A day off in Indianapolis ◆ Black winemakers ◆ high cuisine on the high seas ◆ Atlanta as a business hub city ◆ a delicious spa ingredient ◆ from Miami to Australia, February's must-visit places

Tried & Tested

69
▶ The Dorchester hotel in London ▶ Korean Air Prestige Class from Miami to Seoul ▶ Guatemala City's Casa del Ron Aeropuerto lounge ▶ Piegari Ristorante in Miami ▶ Washington, D.C.'s Press Club bar ▶ lightweight check-in bags ▶ the Range Rover Sport

Passport

82
▼ **Chelsea Handler**
The comedian shares her favorite places

70
An expert review of London's recently renovated Dorchester hotel

BUSINESS TRAVELER
PEAK PERFORMANCE

ON THE COVER
Jennifer Hudson, photographed by Jay L. Clendenin/Contour RA/Getty Images

IMAGES LEFT: COURTESY OF ALASKA AIRLINES; RIGHT: COURTESY OF THE DORCHESTER LONDON

Echoes of History
Embrace the Timeless Allure of Dubrovnik, Croatia's Crown Jewel
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MATCHMAKING

EDITOR'S LETTER

WELCOME TO THE February issue of *Business Traveler*. We're delighted to feature as this month's cover star EGOT legend Jennifer Hudson, who over her career of more than 20 years has reached the pinnacle of success, winning an Oscar, two Grammys, an Emmy and a Tony. But we're equally celebrating her achievements as an entrepreneur, producer and philanthropist. Not only has she helped bring to life a number of award-winning projects, but she is also a real-estate pioneer, restoring Chicago's historic Ramova Theatre with Chance the Rapper and Quincy Jones. She also is a leader in charity, establishing a foundation in honor of her late nephew, mother and brother and partnering with Mastercard to bring visibility and funds to women- and minority-owned businesses. In our exclusive interview, she offers essential advice for everyone looking to prosper while maintaining their individual spirit.

As more business travelers are hitting the road, they're also realizing a corresponding need to keep fit during their journey. Airlines, airports and hospitality groups are responding with wellness-oriented spaces, activities and technology, from biophilic designs and mindfulness apps to onboard well-being zones where passengers can engage in guided movements. Our aviation feature delves into this developing sector. Meanwhile, this month's travel story whisks readers away to the Caribbean—but not for the usual R&R. We look at how the region is embracing corporate culture with enhanced boardrooms, event spaces and business perks designed for elite executives to close that "deal in the sun," rum punch in hand.

Elsewhere, we chat with culinary kingpin Lee Schrager as he prepares for the latest edition of the South Beach Wine & Food Festival, and review top routes, lounges and hotels.

Please enjoy this issue.

Eric Newill

Eric Newill
Editor in Chief

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L'OREAL THOMPSON PAYTON
WRITER
Payton speaks with Jennifer Hudson about the EGOT star's focus on investing in community. "When she talks about her purpose, it's obvious that her life's work is so much bigger than her." Payton is the author of *Stop Waiting for Perfect.* Her work has appeared in *New York* magazine.

SHIVANI VORA
WRITER
Inside, Vora speaks with culinary star Lee Schrager about his food and wine festivals in South Beach and New York City. "There's no one Lee doesn't know, and he never fails to surprise with facts or tips about the culinary industry." She writes for *The New York Times* and *Barron's Penta.*

YO HOSOYAMADA
ILLUSTRATOR
The London-based artist illustrates our feature about the travel industry's efforts to help business travelers maintain their wellness habits on the go. "Just five minutes of stretching in the aisle every few hours makes a difference post-travel." Her clients include *Mr Porter* and *Wired.*

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Multnomah Falls, near Portland, Oregon

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TRAVEL
Bespoke loyalty perks

AIRLINES
Alaska Airlines heads to Asia

BUSINESS
Capital One's chef collab

HOTELS
Debuts and redos

Memos

Airline and travel info from around the globe

DESTINATIONS

Sister Cities

Distinct yet nearby metropolitan areas separated by state lines

STORY BY
JESS SWANSON

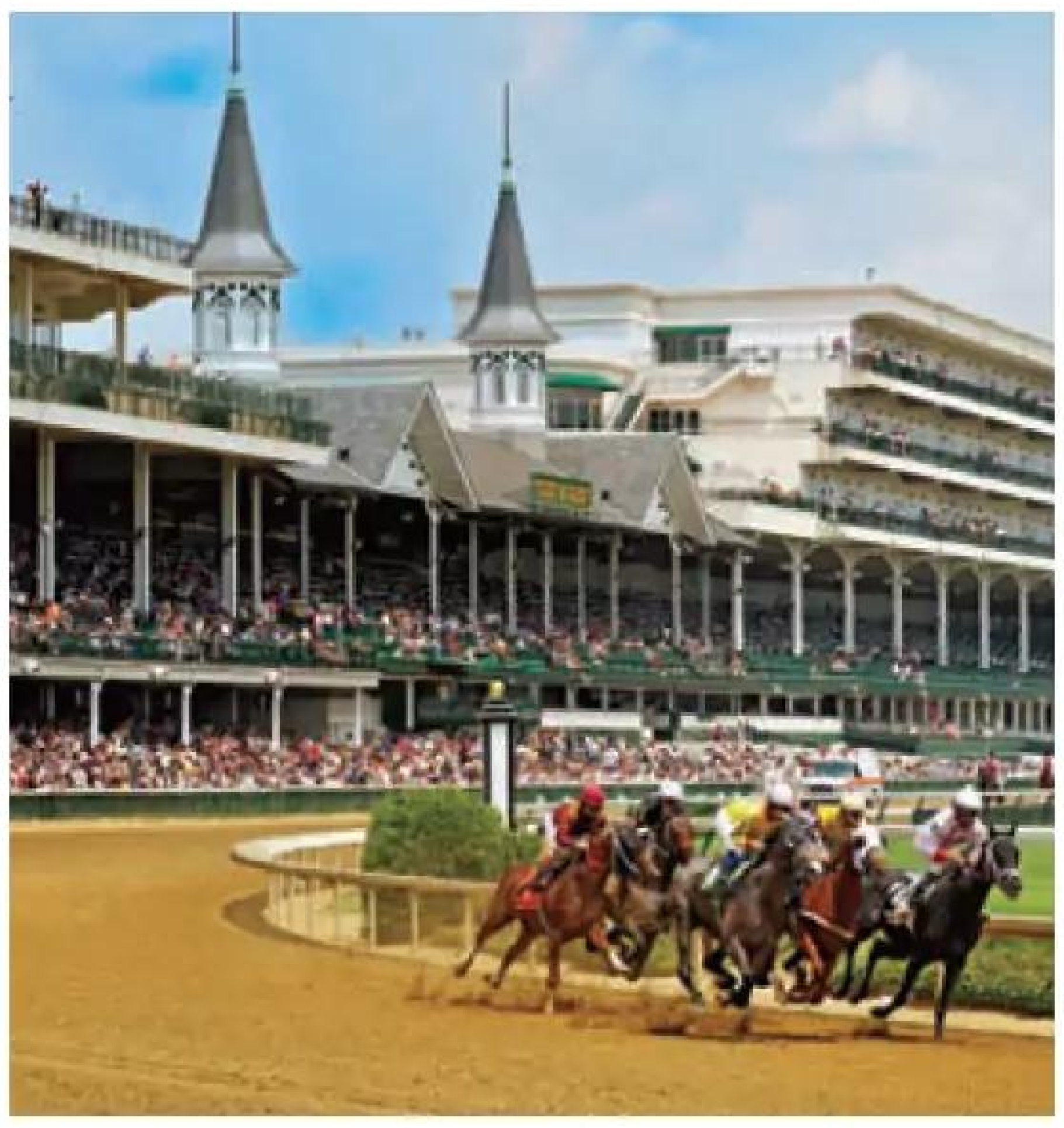
Continued from previous page

Seattle and Portland, Oregon
The Emerald City and the City of Roses are both filled with lush green spaces and vibrant live music scenes. But the similarities end there. A state line and 175 miles separate these two metropolises, but rather than vie for travelers, the private, not-for-profit destination marketing organizations Visit Seattle and Travel Portland have called a truce. "We have a very positive, noncompetitive relationship with Visit Seattle," explains Billie Moser, the vice president of community engagement and international affairs at Travel Portland. "It's just logical to work together." It's so collaborative that the separate agencies' international teams often host joint best-practice retreats. Before Moser met with nearly 40 tour operators at the Brand USA Travel Week in London, she and her Visit Seattle counterpart consulted one another to strategize and "align our efforts," Moser says.

> "The cities are a perfect two-destination getaway."

Chicago and Milwaukee
The most populous city in the Midwest, Chicago features a checklist of renowned art museums, landmark skyscrapers and must-try signature dishes so extensive that it could easily fill a weeklong visit. But Claire Koenig, vice president of communications and advocacy for the nonprofit destination marketing organization Visit Milwaukee, explains that Brew City regularly welcomes visitors on Chicago-centered itineraries thanks to the easy 90-minute drive and convenient Amtrak Hiawatha line, which runs seven times daily from Chicago to Milwaukee. "The cities are a perfect two-destination getaway," Koenig says. "The conveniently short distance between Milwaukee and Chicago makes it easy to take in the best of both cities." In Milwaukee, Koenig recommends travelers visit any of the dozens of craft microbreweries, the Harley-Davidson Museum, and America's Black Holocaust Museum. "Festival enthusiasts can also enjoy national headliners at Summerfest, the world's largest music festival," she says, adding that the event boasts 800 acts and 1,000 performances each year.

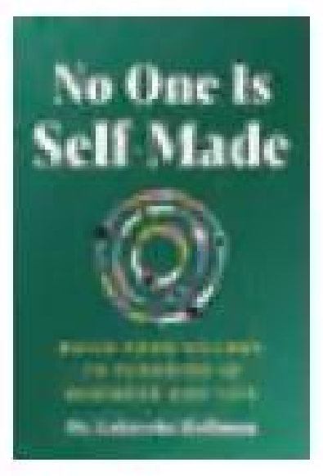
Cincinnati, Covington and Louisville, Kentucky
"Both Louisville and Cincinnati have a shared history as highly populated river cities," says Jordan Skora, marketing communications manager at Louisville Tourism. In Derby City, Skora suggests visiting Churchill Downs and the Muhammad Ali Center. Riverboat tours connect Louisville to the Covington and Cincinnati region, located 130 miles north along the Ohio River, as well as the Kentucky Bourbon Trail B-Line, which includes bourbon-centric restaurants and a dozen bourbon bars. The bright blue John A. Roebling Suspension Bridge (a.k.a. the "Singing Bridge") spans the Ohio River connecting Cincinnati and Covington. "It's akin to the ease of moving from Manhattan to Brooklyn," says Julie Kirkpatrick, president and CEO of meetNKY. "It's a delightful juxtaposition of urban energy in Cincinnati and eclectic hospitality in Covington." Be sure to explore the Bavarian-inspired Mainstrasse Village and hip street art in Covington on the Ohio River's southern shore, Kirkpatrick says, and to try Cincinnati's famed chili and visit the Cincinnati Art Museum, American Sign Museum and National Underground Railroad Freedom Center on the northern shore. The well-known aviation paradox of landing in Kentucky to visit Cincinnati across the state line at the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport reflects the tight-knit bond between the Buckeye and Bluegrass states.



ABOVE FROM LEFT Harley-Davidson Museum, Milwaukee; Space Needle, Seattle; Churchill Downs, Louisville, Kentucky

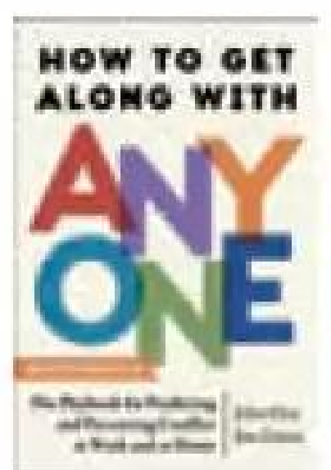
IMAGES TOP LEFT: DALE JOHNSON/500PX/GETTY IMAGES; TOP RIGHT: DANITA DELIMONT CREATIVE/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; INSET: COURTESY OF HARLEY-DAVIDSON MUSEUM

BOOKS



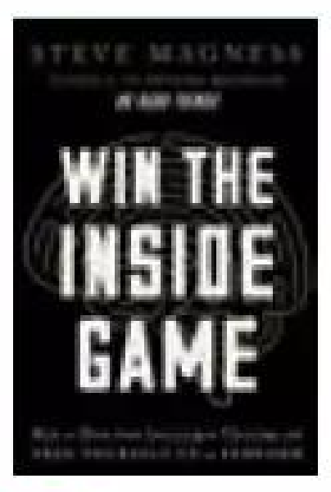
***No One Is Self-Made: Build Your Village to Flourish in Business and Life* by Dr. Lakeysha Hallmon (out 2/4)**

● Dr. Lakeysha Hallmon's new book argues against the myth of individualism and instead concludes that, as the old saying goes, "it takes a village" to lead to collective financial gain. Hallmon offers tips on how entrepreneurs can achieve purpose-driven success.



***How to Get Along With Anyone: The Playbook for Predicting and Preventing Conflict at Work and at Home* by John Eliot and Jim Guinn (out 2/18)**

● Eliot and Guinn have coached *Fortune* 500 companies, NASA, nonprofits and government agencies. They say people deal with conflicts in one of five ways, and offer tools on how to identify conflict styles.



***Win the Inside Game: How to Move From Surviving to Thriving, and Free Yourself Up to Perform* by Steve Magness (out 2/4)**

● An anti-doping whistleblower, Steve Magness is the coach behind *Do Hard Things*. He uses case studies and interviews to rewrite the book on high achievement. Magness sets out a map for sustainable success, which involves reorienting your thinking. —NICHOLAS DERENZO

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STORY BY **ENRIQUE PERRELLA**

EVOLUTION
ALASKA GOES FROM AN ALL-BOEING FLEET TO A MULTIBRAND AIRLINE

Around the World

Alaska Airlines introduces inaugural flights to Asia

Alaska
N434AS

ALASKA AIRLINES is spreading its wings on a global scale. Following its $1.9 billion acquisition of Hawaiian Airlines, Alaska announced ambitious plans to transform Seattle-Tacoma (SEA) into a premier international hub. With access to Hawaiian's wide-body aircraft and established transpacific routes, Alaska aims to generate $1 billion in additional profits by 2027 and position itself as a robust player in long-haul international travel.

Historically, Alaska has focused its operations within North and Central America using a fleet of Boeing 737 jets. The Hawaiian acquisition changes that narrative, giving Alaska access to 24 Airbus A330-200s and two Boeing 787 Dreamliners, with ten more 787s on order. These wide-body aircraft pave the way for Alaska's plans to operate 12 international routes from SEA by 2030. "From our global gateway in Seattle, we can conveniently connect travelers from across our network as they head to Asia and beyond," said Alaska Airlines CEO Ben Minicucci.

The airline's global ambitions will begin in 2025 with daily nonstop service from SEA to Tokyo Narita (NRT) launching in May, followed by a route to Seoul Incheon (ICN) in October.

"Hawaiian's spacious wide-body aircraft, along with its excellent onboard service and amenities, will make for a terrific trip from one side of the Pacific Rim to the other," Minicucci added.

Alaska Airlines surprised many with its decision to retain Hawaiian's Airbus A321neo fleet, a departure from its historically all-Boeing narrow-body lineup. In fact, Alaska plans to increase the A321neo's daily utilization by 25 percent, equating to productivity gains equivalent to adding seven new aircraft without acquiring more planes.

"The A330 will also have a place in our fleet moving forward," Minicucci confirmed on industry-leading podcast *The Air Show*. He noted that the A330s could be deployed on high-demand routes such as Seattle to Anchorage, freeing up Alaska's 737 fleet to bolster capacity elsewhere.

Alaska is also doubling down on premium offerings in response to growing demand for its First Class cabin. The airline plans to expand seating on its A330s, building on a strategy that has already seen 29 percent of seats on its narrow-body jets designated as premium.

To enhance the premium experience further, Alaska is developing a flagship international lounge at SEA and new lounges at San Diego and Honolulu. Additionally, the airline is working with Bank of America to introduce a co-branded credit card, expected to feature elevated perks for frequent travelers.

Despite the integration of Hawaiian's fleet and routes, the two airlines will continue to operate as separate brands. Minicucci confirmed on *The Air Show* that Hawaiian will still operate all flights to and from Hawaii, while Alaska will manage mainland domestic and international operations.

Alaska Airlines is transitioning from a domestic and regional operator to a global carrier by launching long-haul flights from its Seattle-Tacoma hub

TRAVEL TECH

Find Favor

Apple is now allowing users to share AirTag luggage locations with airlines and airports

STORY BY **LAUREN SMITH**

APPLE IS making it even easier to use an AirTag to track down lost luggage by allowing users to temporarily share the location of their tag with a third party, such as an airline or airport. Travelers have been packing Apple's tracking devices into their luggage since the product launched in 2021, using them to keep tabs on checked baggage during air travel. But while travelers can pinpoint the location of bags with the devices, they've sometimes struggled to convey its exact location to airline and airport staff who can retrieve the bags from secure areas or distant airports. Recognizing the now common use of its Bluetooth-enabled tracking devices, Apple is rolling out a new Share Item Location feature on the iOS Find My app, *MacRumors* has reported. The option generates a link that can be passed on to an airline or other trusted person. If the recipient is using an Apple device, the link opens the Find My app, showing the last known location of the designated AirTag. On non-Apple devices, the link directs to a web page with a map highlighting the item's location. The new feature is being rolled out as part of the iOS 18.2 beta 2 update, currently being tested by developers. The wider public will get access when the update is to sent to devices worldwide.

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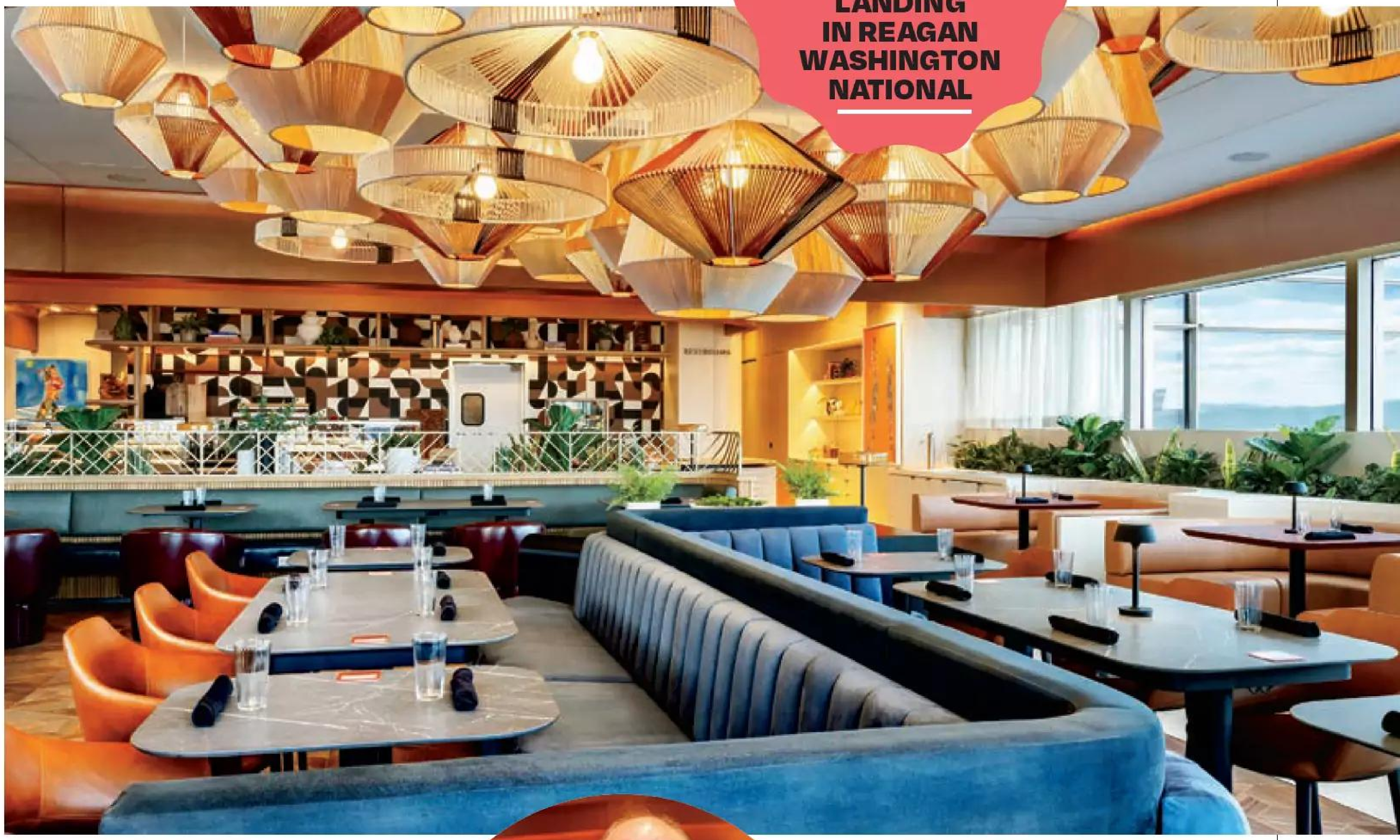
STORY BY
ERIN GIFFORD

Taste Maker

The new Capital One Landing partners with Michelin-starred chef José Andrés

NOW OPEN
CAPITAL ONE LANDING IN REAGAN WASHINGTON NATIONAL



CAPITAL ONE has reimagined its airport lounge experience with the debut of Capital One Landing at Washington, D.C.'s Ronald Reagan National Airport. In partnership with Michelin-starred chef José Andrés, this first-of-a-kind lounge redefines the preflight airport experience, blending curating dining, tech-forward amenities and functional design.

Located in Terminal 2's National Hall near Concourse D, this 5,500-square-foot space lacks amenities such as showers and carrel-style workspaces. However, it makes up for this with a dining program featuring upscale grab-and-go options. Additionally, a second Capital One Landing is set to open in Terminal B at New York LaGuardia in 2025.

"We wanted to create a way to have an elevated food experience that was low-stress and easy," said Lia Dean, president of banking and premium products for Capital One. "We came up with something that we were excited about, that had a modern feel, that had incredible food."

Upon entering Capital One Landing, travelers are greeted by an inviting design featuring warm, earthy tones. Expansive floor-to-ceiling windows flood the space with natural light and offer views of planes taxiing to and from their gates on the tarmac.

Central to the lounge's appeal is its thoughtfully arranged layout, comfortable U-shaped booths that foster collaboration, and two-top tables for solo travelers working ahead of their flights. A bar area with cushioned stools and high-top tables facilitates relaxation and conversation. On arrival, travelers are assigned seats at one of the tables in the lounge.

Soft ambient lighting, concentrated in the center of the lounge, enhances the space. Amenities like power outlets at every seat, under-table hooks, luggage nooks, and high-speed Wi-Fi add to the functionality. There are also two private restrooms within the lounge.

At the heart of Capital One Landing is its culinary program, helmed by Andrés. Inspired by his Spanish heritage, the menu celebrates the vibrant, communal spirit of tapas culture. Favorites such as *pan con tomate*, *pincho de tortilla de patatas* and *gambas al ajillo* showcase bold, authentic flavors. Travelers can enjoy made-to-order selections or opt for ready-to-eat options from an artisanal glass case.

FROM TOP The new Capital One Landing offers a unique culinary journey crafted by Michelin-starred chef José Andrés

In addition, roving food carts deliver freshly prepared offerings to your seat. Mimosas and pastries brighten morning flights, and later in the day, travelers can indulge in savory Basque cheesecakes or caviar cones—*labneh* topped with caviar and a hint of lemon zest.

Hand-crafted signature cocktails, like the Landing G&T and the Fino Red Snapper, a sherry-infused take on the traditional Bloody Mary, add flair to the beverage program and are complemented by a selection of regional wines and craft beers. A dedicated cart roams the space with gins, tonics and garnishes. For those short on time, the On the Fly section features prepackaged offerings such as *bocata de tortilla de patatas* and flautas, along with salads, sandwiches and fruit cups.

Lounge Access

Capital One Landing welcomes travelers with complimentary access for Venture X and Venture X Business cardholders, who may bring one guest for free. Additional guests cost $45 each. Venture and Spark Miles cardholders pay $45 per visit, while non-cardholders are charged $90. Children under two enter for free. The lounge is open from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m., and the On the Fly section offers snacks daily from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m.

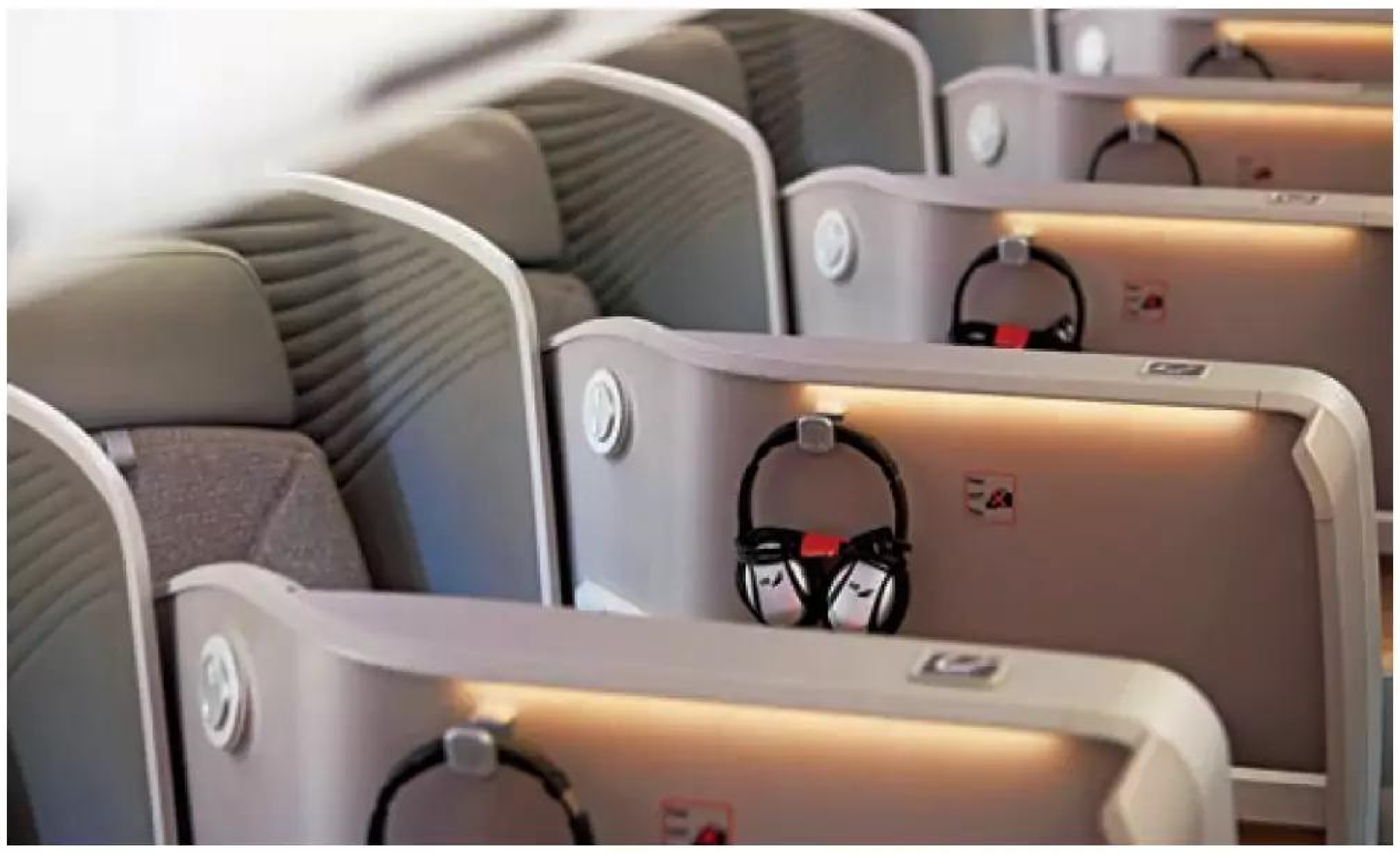
IMAGES **COURTESY OF CAPITAL ONE LANDING**

UPDATE

STORY BY
ENRIQUE PERRELLA

Straight and Narrow

Iberia revolutionizes transatlantic travel with nonstop narrow-body flights from Madrid



IBERIA HAS etched its name in aviation history, launching the world's first Airbus A321XLR (extra long range) on a transatlantic flight from Madrid to Boston. This landmark journey isn't just a milestone for the airline but also a leap forward in narrow-body aircraft capabilities, setting the stage for more efficient and flexible long-haul travel.

The XLR, designed for ultra-long-haul routes, aims to revolutionize the way airlines connect distant, underserved destinations. Its advanced range and fuel efficiency make it an ideal candidate for what the industry calls "long-thin routes," enabling carriers to expand their networks without relying on higher-capacity wide-body jets.

Capable of flying up to 4,700 nautical miles without refueling, the plane achieves its impressive range thanks to a large additional center fuel tank located beneath the passenger cabin. According to Airbus, the A321XLR delivers fuel savings of more than 40 percent compared to traditional models and extends its range by 15 percent compared to the A321LR, already in service with airlines such as JetBlue for transatlantic flights. Iberia's initial operations with the XLR include routes to Boston and Washington-Dulles, with flights lasting up to eight hours and 15 minutes. A specially trained team of two pilots and four cabin crew members will manage these transatlantic journeys.

The A321XLR's groundbreaking range has sparked debate about passenger comfort on long-haul narrow-body flights. However, the aircraft features a two-class configuration with 14 full-flat Business Class seats and 168 Economy Class seats. Iberia has chosen Thompson Aero to install its VantageSOLO seats in Business Class, offering a sleek design, direct aisle access, textured leather cushions surrounded by a refined gray color palette, and subtle Iberia branding. Recessed lighting enhances the ambiance, while adjustable tables and universal power outlets—including USB-A and USB-C ports—make it easy for travelers to work or relax. An 18.5-inch 4K touch-screen monitor ensures top-tier in-flight entertainment. Iberia is set to receive eight A321XLRs, part of a larger 14-unit order by its parent company, IAG. The remaining six will be delivered to Aer Lingus, which plans to operate the aircraft on routes to destinations such as Nashville and Indianapolis. Globally, the XLR has garnered interest, with more than 550 orders from 25 airlines, signaling its transformative potential in aviation.

→

IMAGES **COURTESY OF IBERIA**

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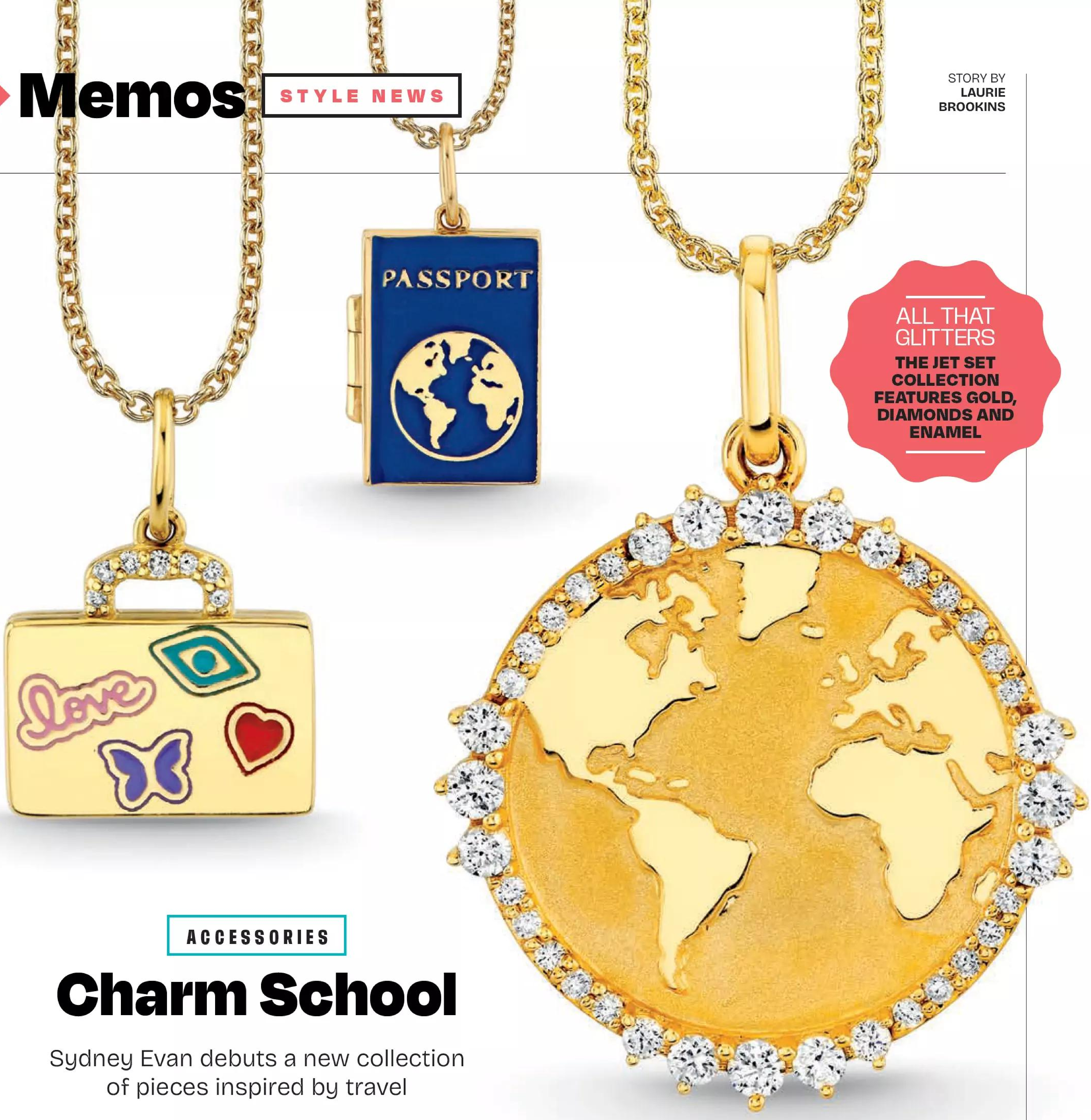
STORY BY
LAURIE
BROOKINS

ACCESSORIES

Charm School

Sydney Evan debuts a new collection of pieces inspired by travel



ALL THAT GLITTERS

THE JET SET COLLECTION FEATURES GOLD, DIAMONDS AND ENAMEL

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT Sydney Evan Suitcase, Passport and World Traveler charms

WANDERLUST NEVER fails to inspire Rosanne Karmes, a notion abundantly clear with her latest collections. The founder and designer of L.A.-based jewelry label Sydney Evan, Karmes has built something of a cult following among fans of her beaded bracelets and wide-ranging selection of charms and pendants. Starting with a horseshoe motif with pavé diamonds when she launched her brand in 2001 (Sydney Evan is named for her two children), Karmes has since created a vast array of themes focused on luck, spirituality, the stars, love—and that's just for starters.

Now Karmes has debuted a variety of designs influenced by her passion for travel, available online and at retailers including Neiman Marcus. In addition to Joy Luck Club, highlighting the 12 Chinese zodiac symbols and inspired by a recent trip through Asia, as well as her animal-themed Safari collection, Karmes also launched Jet Set, which anyone who values their frequent-flier status will surely appreciate.

Crafted in 14-karat yellow gold and embellished with diamonds or enamel, each piece is beautifully detailed. The enameled Passport charm, for instance, is hinged and opens to reveal engravings that enhance the travel theme. Other designs include diamond-accented airplanes and cameras, both available as a pendant or stud earrings, as well as a World Traveler medallion charm and motifs of hotel keys and do-not-disturb signs.

"The World Traveler charm is particularly powerful to me—it symbolizes solidarity with all humans belonging to this one planet," Karmes says. "The whole ethos of my brand is creating playful fine jewelry with something for everyone, pieces that bring joy and make you feel good." *Starting at $530, at sydneyevan.com*

IMAGES COURTESY OF SYDNEY EVAN

STORY BY
LARK GOULD

CREDIT CARD

Keeping the Faith

Why airlines are offering personalized perks to enhance loyalty programs

GONE ARE the days of “earn and burn” loyalty programs, where accumulating points for a free flight was the ultimate goal. Today, loyalty has taken on a new meaning, driven by the rise of hyper-personalization and an emerging public accustomed to fast action with immediate results. Airlines, hotels and other travel brands are now leveraging data to create bespoke experiences that resonate with individual travelers, fostering deeper engagement and loyalty.

Gen Z lives in a world of instant results, whether streaming content or same-day delivery, says a report from McKinsey. It noted that airline loyalty programs focusing on building miles over time fail to connect with younger travelers who may not fly frequently enough to feel rewarded. A 2024 study from OAG found that only 65 percent of Gen Z belong to an airline loyalty program, compared to 89 percent of baby boomers. Moreover, the increasing saturation of loyalty campaigns has led to “loyalty fatigue” among consumers. A McKinsey report found that the average customer in the U.S. belongs to 17 loyalty programs, but engagement remains low.

To combat this, travel brands are turning to hyper-personalization, using data to craft rewards and experiences that align with individual travelers’ preferences. This goes beyond simply knowing a customer’s age, gender and location. It involves delving into their purchase history, online behavior and aspirations to create resonant experiences.

“To optimize this value exchange, brands must understand their members on a deeper, more personal level,” says James Berry, managing director at Valuedynamx, a provider of data-driven purchase rewards. “This means providing ease of use, helpful recommendations, reward options that resonate and drive feelings of gratification,” he says. “It’s not enough just to drive reward redemption, as unsatisfying or uninspired rewards do not actively drive richer, more frequent engagements. Instead, complimentary and personalized rewards are more likely to create ongoing loyalty program satisfaction.”

Examples can be seen in such programs as Emirates Skywards, which has developed new platforms offering “everyday” ways to gain access to upgraded spaces and experiences through accessible spending and subscription opportunities.

Similarly, Delta runs an aggressive gamification campaign through its SkyMiles program with engaging quizzes and games that members use to get in-flight perks. United, too, reaches customers with benefit offers through targeted messaging across multiple channels.

The benefits of hyper-personalization are clear. A survey by Medallia found that 61 percent of consumers are willing to spend more with companies if they offer a customized experience. And according to Valuedynamx, personalized loyalty programs lead to greater customer satisfaction and frequent interactions.

IMAGES **LEFT: NUTHAWUT SOMSUK/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES; RIGHT: COURTESY OF FOUR SEASONS HOTEL NEW YORK; BOTTOM: YOSHIHIRO MAKINO**

ON OUR RADAR

THE REOPENING of the **Four Seasons Hotel New York** in Midtown is the headliner for February hotel news. The landmark I.M. Pei art deco property was an accommodation of choice for well-heeled business travelers and closed at the onset of the pandemic. It subsequently served as housing for medical personnel and has since been renovated to be even posher than before. The showpiece of a lobby with a 33-foot glass ceiling now features sculptural florals, and guest rooms have been upgraded with new bars, accessories and toiletries from the upscale Spanish skincare brand Natura Bissé. Later this year, the Four Seasons will introduce rooms and suites with kitchen facilities that are designed for longer stays.

Elsewhere in the U.S., **Populus** in downtown Denver is the country’s first carbon-positive hotel. The property is defined by its sustainable design and construction, and a biophilic aesthetic prevails. Populus comprises 265 modern guest rooms, flexible meeting and event spaces, an all-day restaurant and rooftop bar.

Looking internationally, **Alila Shanghai**, located in the Jing’an District, is welcoming guests. The property offers an abundance of amenities, including Chinese and Japanese restaurants, a tea bar and rooftop bar with city views. There’s also a spa with an indoor swimming pool and smartly appointed meeting rooms outfitted with the latest technological innovations. —SHIVANI VORA

→

STORY BY
HANNAH BRANDLER

2030
HELSINKI AIMS TO ACHIEVE CARBON NEUTRALITY

19mi
OF NEW TRAMWAYS WILL BE ADDED IN THE NEXT DECADE

30%
OF THE BUS FLEET IN THE HELSINKI REGION IS ELECTRIC

Top of the Charts

Helsinki has been granted first place in the latest Global Destination Sustainability Index

MARRYING TRAVEL with sustainability is always a challenge, but the latest Global Destination Sustainability (GDS) Index can help travelers make more conscious destination choices.

The GDS Index highlights the top 40 sustainable destinations around the world, basing its rankings on a city's commitment to sustainable tourism, environmental stewardship and community well-being. This year saw new and more demanding criteria—a focus on regenerative tourism, circular economy practices and enhanced climate action.

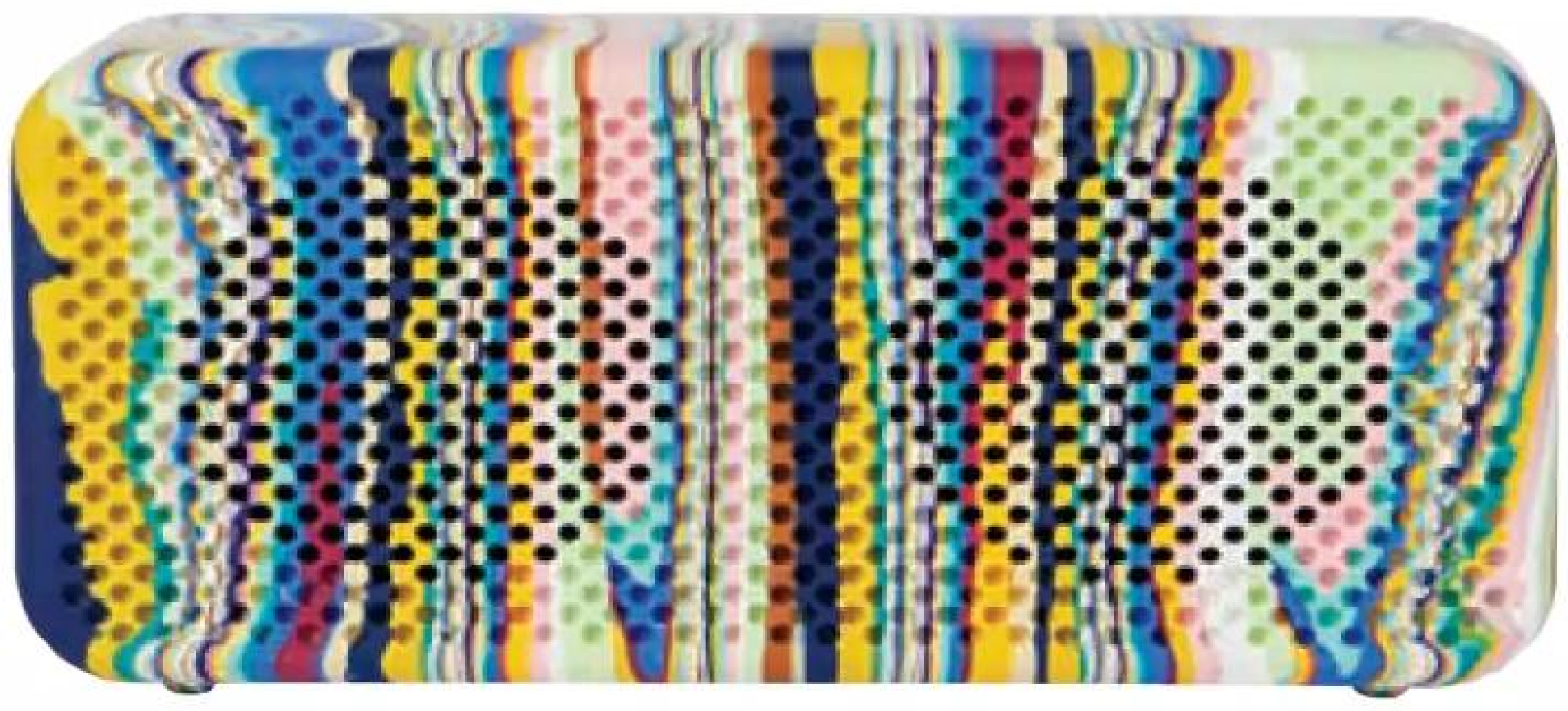
Rising from fourth place in 2023, Helsinki has secured the top slot in the ranking, having increased its share of renewable energy in heat and electricity production, enhancing energy efficiency measures in buildings and promoting sustainable tourism.

Sweden's Gothenburg fell to second place, while Copenhagen came in third. In the U.K., Belfast and Glasgow were ranked ninth and 12th. New to the list are Victoria (22) and Quebec City (37) in Canada, Limerick (38) and Dublin (29) in Ireland, and Denmark's Horsens (39).

Leading the Way

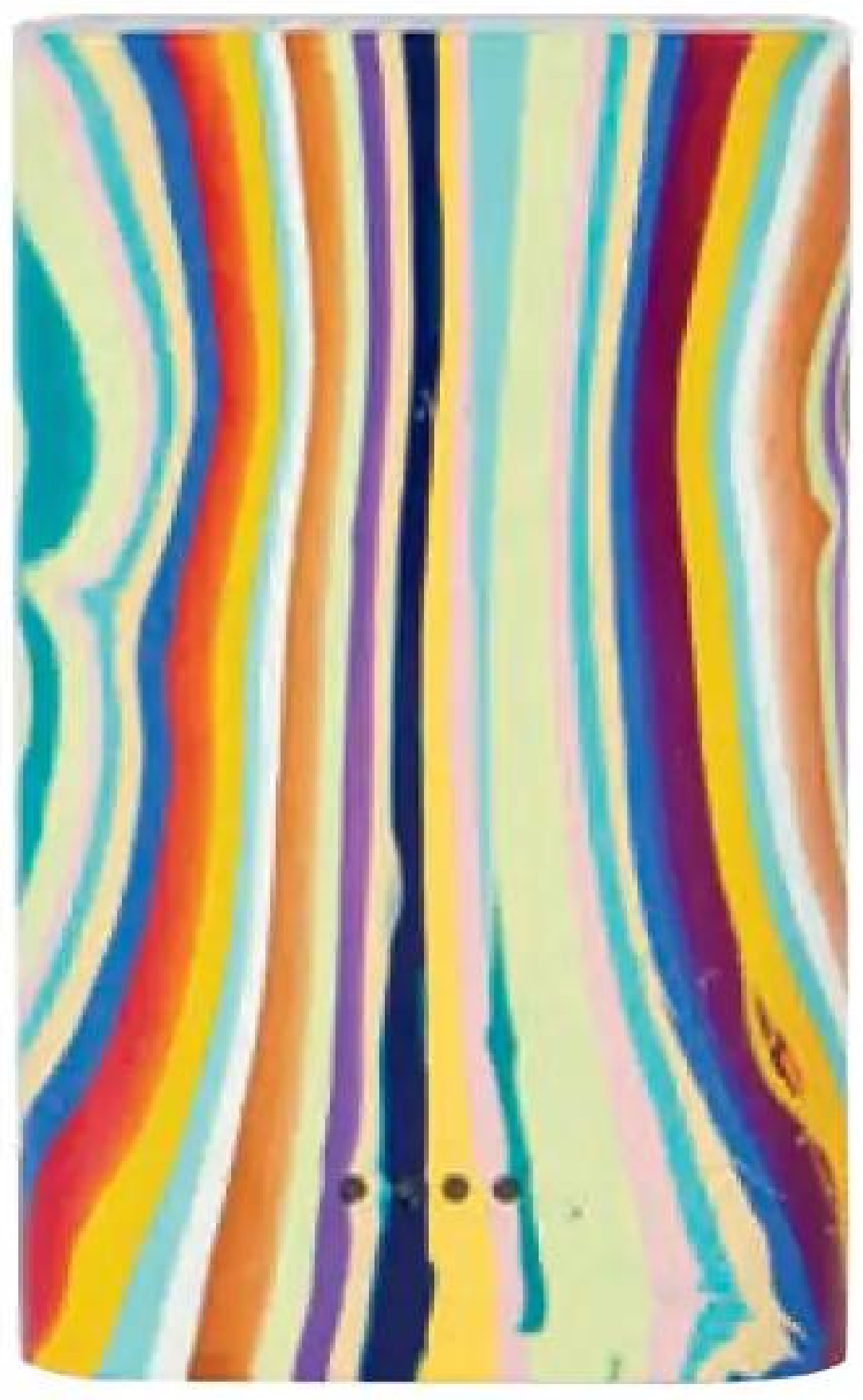
BIOPHILIC INTERIORS are pleasing to the eye but they also serve the planet. Doha's Hamad International Airport's central concourse—home to the indoor tropical garden Orchard—has received LEED Gold certification for its eco efforts. The central concourse was designed to use 30% less energy and 55% less water.

DID YOU KNOW?
LEED stands for Leaders in Energy and Environmental Design. It is a globally recognized certification and green building rating system.



Earn Your Eco Stripes

PAUL SMITH'S TRADEMARK stripes have found a new sustainable home, partnering with Brighton-based design studio Gomi, which focuses on circular lifespans and reducing the need for raw materials. Waste plastic from Paul Smith's supply chain has been transformed into Bluetooth speakers ($413) and power banks ($119). The stripes take on a unique psychedelic, molten-style pattern, thanks to the plastic molding process. Charge two devices simultaneously with the portable charger, and relax with water-resistant speakers by the pool.



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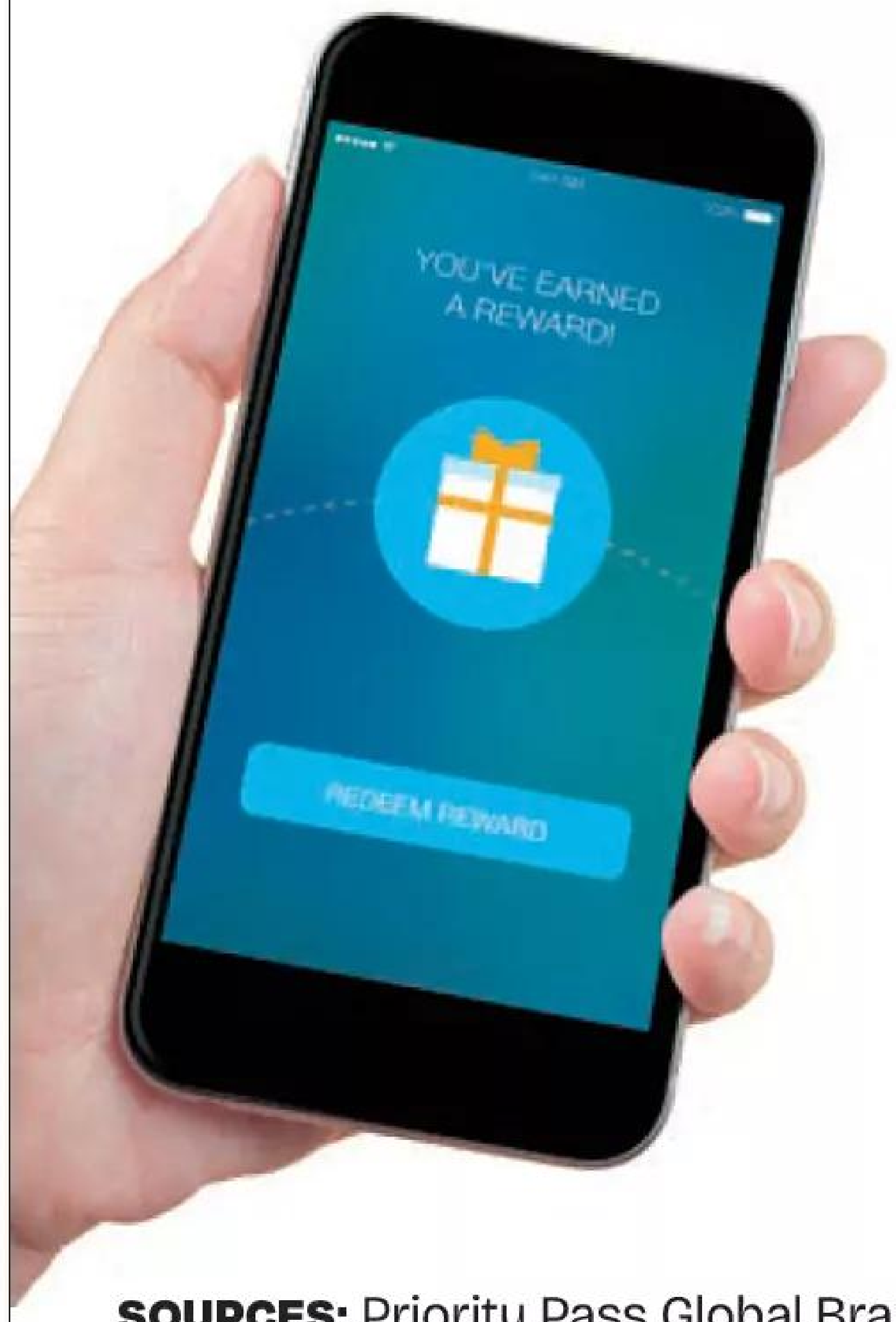
Loyalty Rewards

Exploring the connection between travel benefits and customer loyalty

Airport lounge access is a powerful reward



80%

would consider changing credit card if airport lounge access was removed

SOURCES: Priority Pass Global Brand Research 2024; The Value of Travel Benefits on Cardholder Behavior 2024

CUSTOMERS ARE INCREASINGLY swayed by travel reward benefits. According to research by Priority Pass, 84% of consumers rate travel perks as or more important than the bank or card issuer's reputation when it comes to choosing a credit card.

Airport lounge access is consistently voted as the second most important reward (after cashback opportunities), with 80% of global customers saying they would consider changing card if airport lounge access was removed.

There are some differences between global markets. The persuasive power of lounge access is strongest in the Asia-Pacific region, where 94% of consumers would be willing to switch cards if lounge access was removed, while in the more mature EMEA market, lounge access is often expected as a standard benefit. In the U.S., meanwhile, airport lounge access is such a valuable reward that 78% of customers are willing to pay for a new credit card that offers this benefit.

As the loyalty landscape matures, lounge access will likely also start to come with additonal perks, with the option to bring a guest and guaranteed access starting to emerge as benefit expectations. In the U.S., 69% would already be willing to pay extra for prebooking lounge access.

Other travel benefits rated in the top ten include travel insurance, airport transfers, express airport security lanes and shopping and dining discounts. Discounted airport parking and car hire were also seen as important benefits.

"Our research shows the continued importance of travel rewards to keep customers engaged, spending, and loyal to their payment card provider. To remain competitive and build loyalty, we partner with our clients to evolve these benefits to meet the changing needs of customers. We do this through a combination of investments, collaboration and innovation," said Chris Ross, President Loyalty and Chief Brand Officer of Priority Pass.

Give the people what they want

Chris Ross, President Loyalty and Chief Brand Officer of Priority Pass, discusses customer loyalty behaviors

HOW HAS THE LOYALTY LANDSCAPE EVOLVED?
Loyalty is becoming more automated and personalized. Loyalty programs are also more interconnected, with loyalty currencies becoming tradable.

HOW IMPORTANT ARE TRAVEL BENEFITS?
Travel benefits (anything that makes travel smoother, more comfortable or more special) are one of the most aspirational rewards. Analysis of payment card data shows that the more people use travel benefits on their payment card, the more they use their card. The popularity of airport lounge program Priority Pass as a key travel benefit for credit card propositions underlines this.

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST TURNOFFS FOR CUSTOMERS WHEN IT COMES TO LOYALTY PROGRAMS AND REWARDS?
As with all relationships: unfulfilled promises and breaches of trust (especially around data use and protection). Devaluing loyalty rewards is seen as a failure to uphold a contract with members and represents a key frustration. The barriers to disengagement are lower than ever, while expectations are constantly rising and competition is fierce. Members will no longer tolerate programs that fail to remember their previous interactions or anticipate individual needs. This makes every member interaction both a valuable opportunity and a threat.

WHAT IS "REWARD FATIGUE"?
Reward fatigue denotes decreasing engagement from members. It mainly points to a reduction in the value of rewards, making it more difficult for members to reach a material rewards level. Developing strong partnerships allows loyalty programs to broaden reward relevance and keep the proposition fresh.

ARE WE SEEING GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES?
Surprisingly, there is little attitudinal difference in customers' expectation from loyalty. But there is a difference in tolerance level: Gen Z (and beyond) are far quicker to defect from a brand than boomers, and have higher demands on the customer experience and (digital) interface quality. Conversely, Gen Z are more likely to join a new program, therefore the cost to acquire Gen Z as members is lower—but their tenure as a member is likely to be shorter.

IMAGES ERNEST YANG, GETTY; STATIONIDEA; IZUSEK

What are the pet peeves for customers?

Customers are no longer putting up with poor return on their loyalty

25%
have noticed rewards value being diluted over time

20%
are frustrated by a lack of redemption options

15%
resent a lack of personalization, which means they receive irrelevant and poorly targeted offers

33%
are happy and content with their loyalty program

6%
of customers belong to more than six schemes. Those belonging to multiple schemes are more likely to have concerns

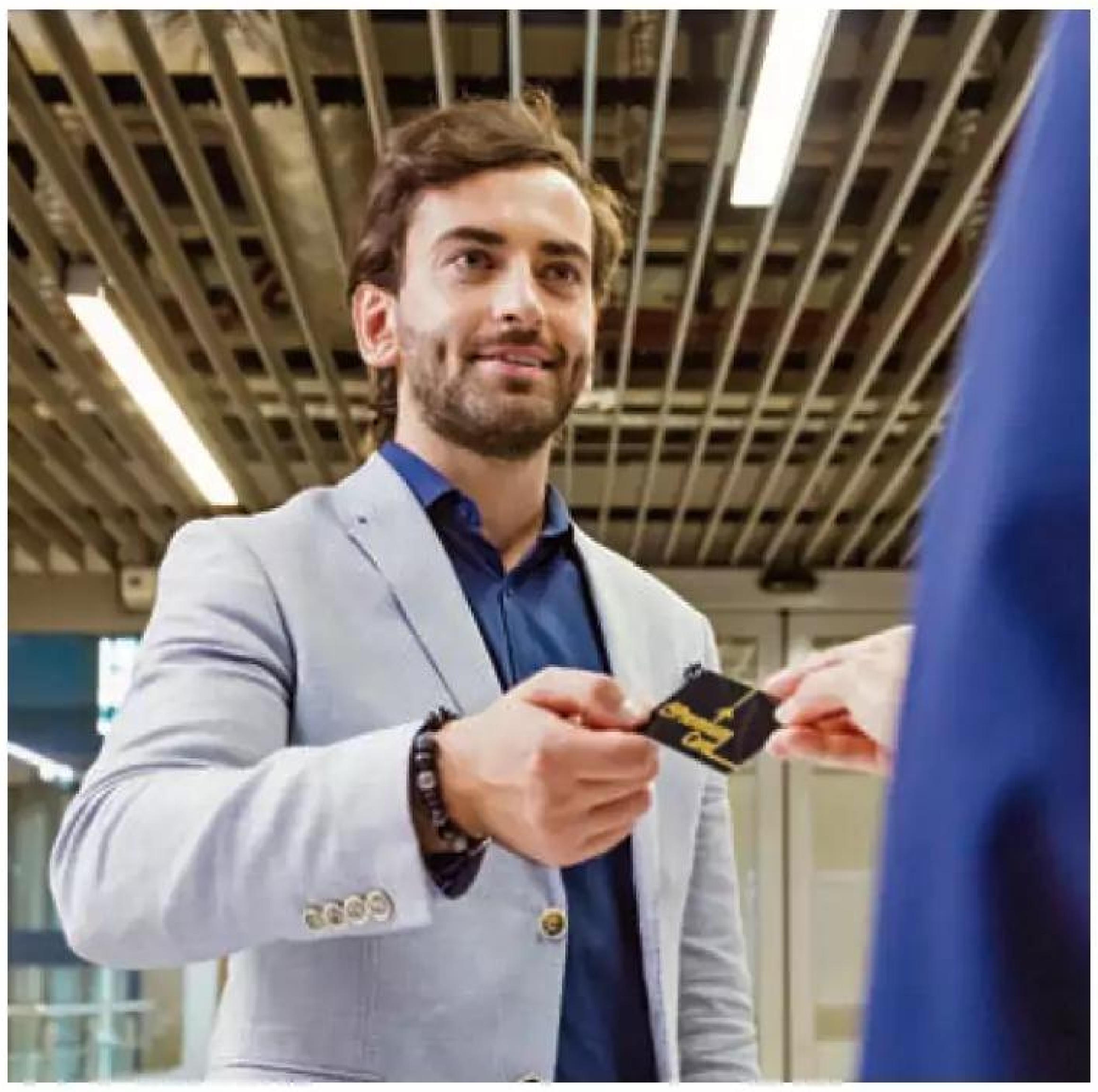
The top 3
changes consumers would make is to increase reward value, have more experiential and partner benefit options, and have more "surprise and delight" perks

SOURCE:
Figures come from Collinson's UK Loyalty Landscape research

Did you know?

Loyalty programs are valuable assets in themselves. In the travel sector, airlines have used the valuation of their loyalty programs as loan collateral—a trend that accelerated during Covid when fare income dried up.

Top tips to maximize your travel perks



1 **HAVE THE RIGHT SET OF CREDIT CARDS** in your wallet to maximize the rewards you seek based on your travel and expenditure patterns. But beware of overcoverage—don't split your loyalty currency earning across too many cards or you will dilute the benefits you receive.

2 **FOCUS ON TRAVEL BRANDS** with a rich earning and redemption partner network.

3 **CONSIDER PAID-FOR ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS** from airports, airlines and hotel groups—often the "break-even" point for such programs is quite low, as they intend to generate loyalty and additional spending.

Keynote

Where Innovation Meets Inspiration

CORNER OFFICE *STORY BY SHIVANI VORA*

FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD

Culinary kingpin Lee Schrager hosts another world-class lineup of top chefs for this month's South Beach Wine & Food Festival

LEE SCHRAGER, the founder of the South Beach Wine & Food Festival (SOBEWFF) and New York City Wine & Food Festival (NYCWFF), is a celebrity in elite culinary circles. Events celebrating food were in their infancy 25 years ago when he launched the South Beach edition. Schrager is the chief communications officer and senior vice president of corporate social responsibility for Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits, and he says that his impetus for starting the festivals was to support the Chaplin School of Hospitality & Tourism Management at Florida International University.

"Giving back to communities where we do business, particularly as it relates to education and feeding people, is something Southern is big on," he says. "I thought the best way to do that was to have a significant event on South Beach that pertained to food, wine and spirits and was fun and sexy."

The company fronted more than $500,000 to fund the inaugural festival in 2000, but the debut was such a hit that Southern never had to support it financially again. "We had five events and were expecting 2,500 people to attend, but 6,000 showed up," Schrager says. "We made $360,000 in year one and have been profitable since."

Schrager credits the success to what he calls a "big break." "My good friend the restaurateur Jeffrey Chodorow convinced his then business partner Alain Ducasse to fly in from France and host a high-end French dinner for the event," he says. "That gave us instant credibility. Many known chefs worldwide contacted me afterwards and asked if they could come the next year."

In its second edition, the festival saw more than 10,000 guests, including out-of-towners. Food Network stars Emeril Lagasse and Bobby Flay participated, along with other notables such as Texas chef Dean Fearing and Miami barbecue king Steven Raichlen.

For year three, Schrager persuaded the Food Network to be the festival's lead sponsor, which it continues to be today. "The Food Network put us on the map, and the advertising and marketing for the festival went to another level," Schrager says.

IMAGES **MELANIE DUNEA**

FROM RIGHT Wylie Dufresne, Patrick O'Connell, Anthony Bourdain, Norman Van Aken, Frederic Delaire, Michelle Gayer and Lee Schrager at the SOBEWFF Charlie Trotter Tribute Dinner, 2012; with Martha Stewart at the NYCWFF Rosé Brunch, 2015

SOBEWFF
food network
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"Consumers today are so aware and hold us to a higher standard."

"From there we've grown every year, even during the pandemic."

The New York iteration came in 2007 when Southern entered the local market for the first time. However, the charity was different. "Chefs care about meals for people who can't feed themselves or their families, so in New York, we partnered with nonprofits that fight hunger," Schrager says. Today, that charity is God's Love We Deliver.

According to Schrager, NYCWFF endured a fair share of bumps to gain traction. "We had to deal with unions for labor, which is costly, and renting the venues was expensive," Schrager says. "We were lucky to be profitable, but the number was significantly less than what we did in South Beach. Even today, it still is."

Securing talent, however, was never an issue for either festival. Attendees have rubbed elbows with Massimo Bottura, Ferran Adrià, Anthony Bourdain, Martha Stewart, Rachael Ray and Nobu Matsuhisa.

In October, the most recent NYCWFF hosted 40,000 guests at just shy of 100 events. This year's South Beach festival—which runs from February 20 to 23—will see 60,000 attendees at more than 110 events, including sit-down dinners, master classes and late-night bashes.

Further, South Beach no longer reflects its only location. "We have events all over—Coconut Grove, Coral Gables, everywhere really," Schrager says.

He's most excited this year about a dinner honoring the three-Michelin-starred chef Dominique Crenn, prepared by culinary greats including Ducasse, the famed Peruvian chef Gastón Acurio, Nancy Silverton, Cat Cora and Daniela Soto-Innes. Also, in a first, SOBEWFF will bring to life Guy Fieri's hit television show *Tournament of Champions* on the sands of South Beach.

Even though the festivals sell themselves, he notes challenges. The biggest one is finding fresh talent and keeping things innovative. "Consumers today are so aware and hold us to a higher standard," Schrager says. "I feel pressure to deliver."

In Miami, weather is another potential hurdle. "In New York, most events are inside. It's the opposite in Miami, and rain can be a damper," he says.

Still, he can't downplay what the festivals have accomplished. NYCWFF has raised more than $17 million for various hunger organizations, and South Beach has generated more than $46 million for the Chaplin School, with most of the money going toward student scholarships.

"The impact of the money for students is incredible, but for me, the best part is seeing these students work all parts of the festivals," Schrager says. "They're paid and interact with the top winemakers and chefs in the world. It's an opportunity that they may never have had."

OVER THE YEARS

While SOBEWFF and NYCWFF have had many memorable moments, Schrager describes the following three from the former as "legendary."

THE ALAIN DUCASSE HONOR

"When Alain agreed to participate in our first year, I promised to host him if we were around in our 10th. Fortunately, I was able to live up to my word."

HOSTING SPANISH ROYALTY

Mario Batali and José Andrés hosted a dinner for King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofía of Spain. "The perfect evening took a turn for the worse when Batali got drunk."

A TOTAL WASHOUT

At an early edition, Bobby Flay hosted a barbecue on the beach and the skies opened. "It was a monsoon that never stopped. We've had tents ever since."

IMAGES TOP LEFT: COURTESY OF SOBEWFF; BOTTOM LEFT: COURTESY OF NYCWFF; TOP RIGHT: SERGI ALEXANDER/GETTY IMAGES; CENTER AND BOTTOM RIGHT: ALEXANDER TAMARGO/GETTY IMAGES

STORY BY
WILL PACKER

ALWAYS FIND YOUR ROCK

A major filmmaker discusses the importance of having a trusted confidant

IN OUR industry, everyone is focused on titles and positions. They want to meet the big shots, the presidents, the CEOs, the heads of marketing and distribution and film production. I'm that big shot to a lot of folks. A lot of them are trying to get to me. But let me tell you who truly has my ear: Shayla. As my executive assistant, she was my trusted advisor, and her opinion weighed heavily in my decisions. Yet, despite her immense value, people would often overlook her. They would skip over her and try to go straight to me, thinking that I was the one solely making the decisions. But I knew better.

I knew that Shayla was one of the crucial keys to my success. One of the best ways to judge someone is how they treat people whom they perceive can't offer them anything. I learned early in my career to be savvy and find the Shayla in every person's life.

Sure, everyone wants to get to the top dogs, but it's the people they trust and rely on who truly hold the keys to success. You might not ever meet a *Fortune* 500 CEO, but I guarantee you that he or she has a version of an executive assistant/consultant/right hand/confidant whom they entrust a lot of authority to. They may not have fancy titles, but they have the power to change your life and career. So if you can't get an audience with the big boss who has the power to green-light your project, finance your endeavor, hire you for the dream position, find their *right hand*. Your success depends on it.

One of my executives once jokingly commented that I thought Shayla was infallible, and I never disagreed with her. I explained how that couldn't be further from the truth. I disagree with Shayla all the time. People who are really successful over long periods of time tend to put people around them who have differing perspectives and aren't afraid to express it. I told my exec that while I don't always see eye to eye with Shayla, I never question her loyalty or drive. I know that no matter what happens, she has my back. That gives me a great deal of confidence.

I asked him, "What if all my financing dried up? I became persona non grata in the film industry and was left with no options at all? If I had to let everyone go, you and the other execs would start making calls. Thanks to your time at this company, most of you would have no trouble finding employment. But what if I, on the other hand, was reduced to selling oranges on the side of the road under a freeway overpass? What would you do?" He said, "Well, I can't ever imagine that happening, but I guess I would try to get you a job at my new company."

I asked Shayla the same question and she didn't even have to contemplate an answer. There was no hypothetical plan B. She shrugged and responded quickly: "Which underpass would we be working under?"

That's why Shayla will always be part of my crew. While everyone else is uploading their CVs to LinkedIn, Shayla would be on her way to find some oranges. I'm successful. I get a lot of props and publicity, but I couldn't do it without the team around me. And at the core of that team is someone whose loyalty is unquestioned. So my advice to you is get yourself a Shayla. A rock.

Will Packer has produced a wide range of movies that have grossed more than $1 billion worldwide at the box office. He is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and was selected as producer of the 94th Academy Awards, for which he received an Emmy nomination. A longtime Atlanta resident, Packer is a supporter of HBCU initiatives. This is an extract from his book, *Who Better Than You? The Art of Healthy Arrogance & Dreaming Big.*

If you can't get an audience with the boss, find their *right hand.*

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FIND LOVE LIKE A CEO

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STORY BY
JT GENTER

THE BENEFITS AND PITFALLS OF THIRD-PARTY TRAVEL PORTALS

How to maximize points while avoiding booking problems

UNLOCKING THE full value of travel rewards takes strategy. From stacking points through shopping portals and card-linked offers to navigating travel credits and partnerships, there are countless ways to boost your earnings. However, booking through third-party portals often comes with hidden downsides.

Savvy travelers know to use rewards cards to earn points and miles on purchases. However, travelers should look into ways to stack earnings through bonus points or cashback on purchases.

One of the easiest ways to do so is through online shopping. A bounty of portals reward shoppers with bonus airline miles, hotel points or cashback. To score these rewards, you need to log in and click through the link before completing your purchase with a merchant as you otherwise would.

Many card issuers also offer rewards for making purchases at particular merchants. These offers typically require a cardholder to enroll before making an eligible purchase. For example, American Express members can earn cashback or bonus points/miles on purchases through Amex Offers. Other examples include Chase Offers, Citi Merchant Offers, Capital One Offers and Barclaycard Cashback Rewards.

Travelers should also look for partnerships between travel brands. For example, Marriott and Emirates lets eligible travelers "double-dip" by earning points and miles on flights and stays. Accor has inked similar partnerships with airline programs, including Flying Blue, Qatar and Qantas.

In short, there's likely some way of boosting your points earnings (or cashback) on almost any purchase you make, whether through a shopping portal or travel partnership. If you're looking to boost your points and miles earnings, it's worth digging in to figure out just how you can do so.

Booking Through Travel Portals

Many card issuers have added new travel-related statement credits as card benefits. Increasingly, these credits require booking travel through a specific portal to be used. Examples include the $300 travel credit on the Capital One Venture X, the $50 hotel credit on the Chase Sapphire Preferred, and new Delta Stays credits on Amex-issued Delta cards.

If fully utilized, these credits can offset a significant amount of the card's annual fee. However, travelers should be wary of the downsides of booking through any third-party portal. Downsides include travelers not earning hotel points or elite status credits, and elite members not enjoying perks when booking a stay through a third party.

Other pitfalls might not be as clear-cut. For example, hotels often offer cheaper member-only rates when you book directly through the hotel brand that cannot be booked through a third-party portal. Even if the price is the same, cancellation policies may be more stringent when booking through a third-party portal.

Then there's what happens when things go wrong. The travel portal usually controls the booking until just before your trip. That means you must deal with the travel portal—instead of directly with the airline or hotel—if you'd like to change your booking.

Inherent issues can arise from having an intermediary. For example, I recently used my Capital One Venture X $300 travel credit to book a flight through Capital One Travel. The rates were the same as those offered by the airline, and I could list my loyalty number right in the booking to get benefits on the trip and earn credits toward requalification. This seemed like a no-downside way to utilize this travel credit. The Capital One Travel portal confirmed the booking; however, the operating airlines (United and Lufthansa) showed that Capital One Travel booked only three of the four flight segments. When I called to resolve the issue, the only solution I was given was to pay another $2,000 per person to add the final leg of the trip—even though the portal still showed that the flight was booked and confirmed! Although things worked out, it was a stark example of the unexpected pitfalls that can happen when booking through a travel portal.

> The travel portal usually controls the booking until just before your trip.

If you have a credit card that offers one of these credits, it still makes sense to utilize it. However, you should be strategic about doing so. Instead of booking a stay at a brand where you have elite status, try to use a hotel credit to book a stay at an independent hotel. For flight booking, it's best to keep things simple—such as booking a one-way domestic flight.

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"Straightforward prose, a handy table of contents, and worthwhile statistics and examples ... go-to resource on how to get started."
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GIVING IS NOT JUST FOR THE VERY RICH
A HOW-TO GUIDE FOR GIVING AND PHILANTHROPY
DR. SUSAN AURELIA GITELSON
foreword by ROBERT M. MORGENTHAU

DR. SUSAN AURELIA GITELSON
Author

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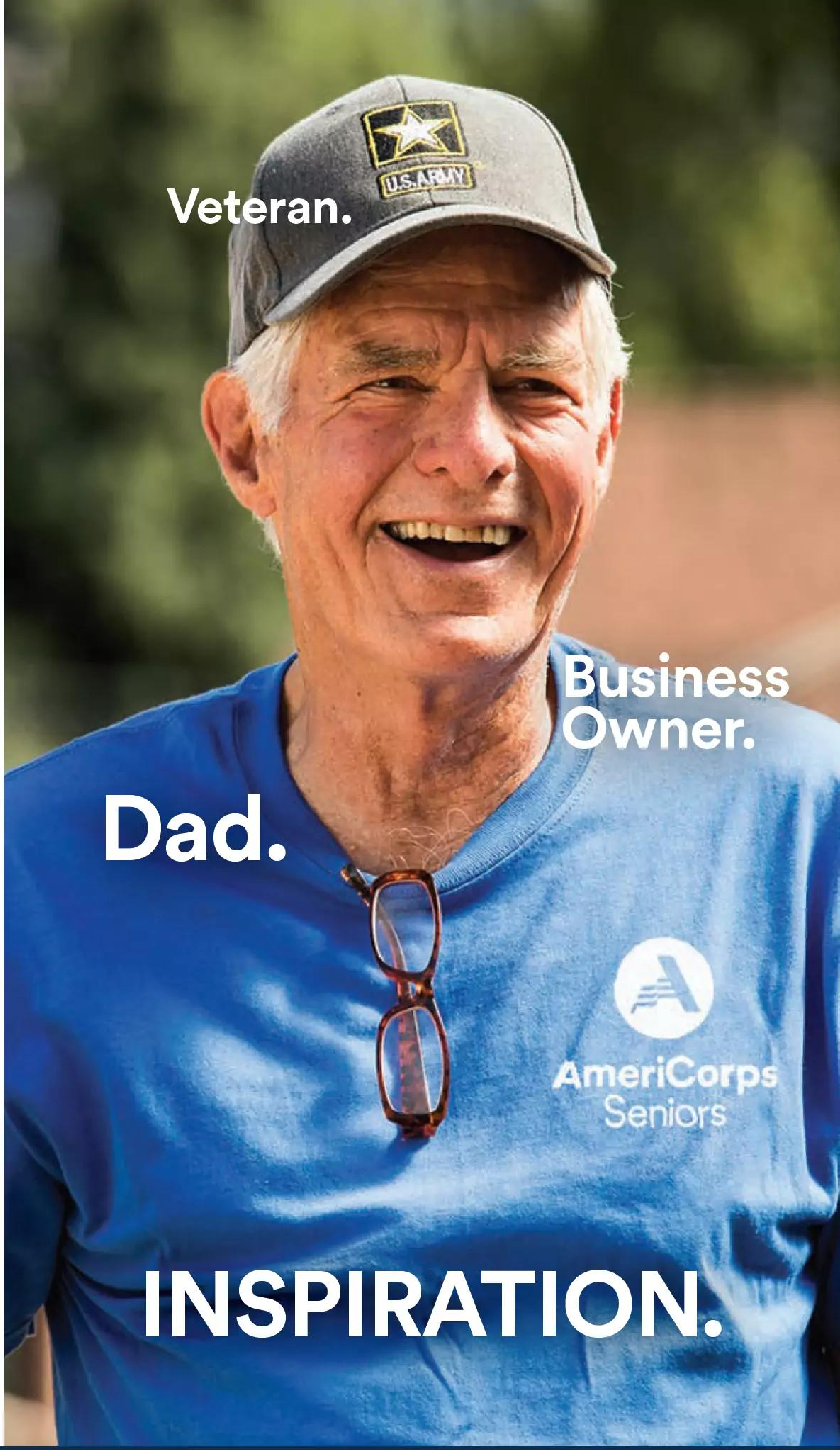
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Bright Ideas

Destinations and trends influencing the culture

STORY BY
LEANDRA BEABOUT

EXTRA DAY

Indianapolis

KNOWN FOR its craft breweries, racetrack and Super Bowl-worthy stadium, Indianapolis—Indy, for short—is also the birthplace of Kurt Vonnegut and Brendan Fraser. And Indiana's capital city holds its own in the business sector. Home to three *Fortune* 500 companies, it also features a convention center that annually hosts such events as the Big Ten Fan Fest, FDIC International and Gen Con. For visitors, there's Fountain Square, lined with vintage shops, music venues and trendy eateries. Or Irvington, where rows of historic homes are punctuated by family-friendly restaurants. Downtown, Lucas Oil Stadium looms large, and White River State Park contains a three-mile canal walk.

Bottleworks District
This former Coca-Cola bottling complex houses everything from

IMAGES **MICHAEL ALLIO/ICON SPORTSWIRE/GETTY IMAGES**

Continued from previous page

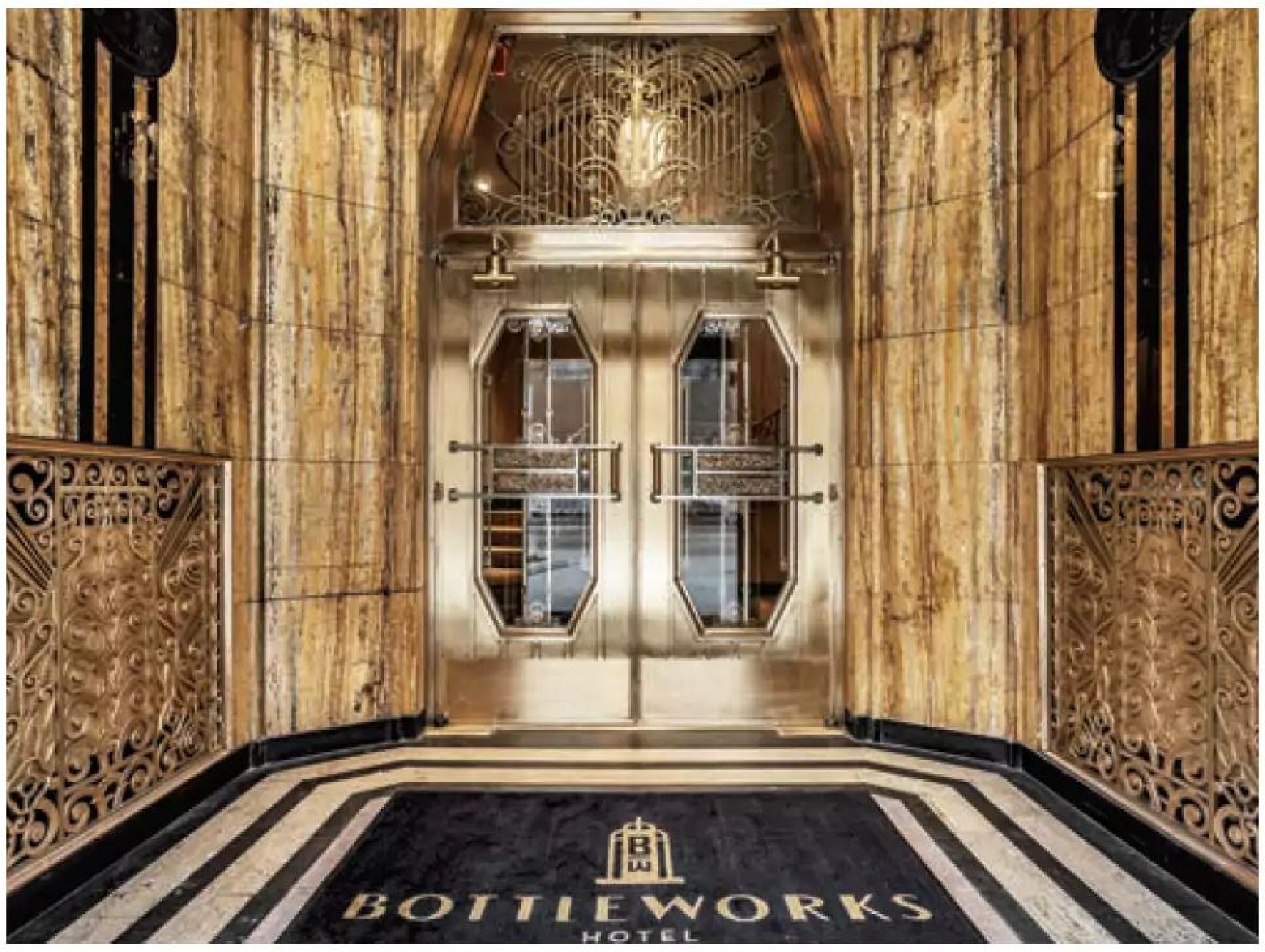
pinball and duckpin bowling to a massive food hall and cozy cinema. But its crowning jewel is the Bottleworks Hotel. The art deco lobby practically fizzes with bright terrazzo floors and colorful mosaic tilework, while the 139 rooms feature silvery palettes with pops of Coca-Cola red. ***bottleworksdistrict.com***

Newfields
Can't decide whether to spend the day exploring nature or contemplating the brushstrokes of Picasso or O'Keeffe? At Newfields, you can do both. The 152-acre campus north of downtown encompasses The Virginia B. Fairbanks Art & Nature Park, the Indianapolis Museum of Art, historic Lilly House and more. ***discovernewfields.org***

Bluebeard
This award-winning eatery inside a 1924 warehouse is a hat tip to Indy native Kurt Vonnegut, who penned a novel of the same name. James Beard Rising Star Semifinalist chef Alan Sternberg crafts fresh daily menus based on local and regional farm ingredients. Bluebeard also shakes up the best classic cocktails in the city. ***bluebeardindy.com***

Indianapolis Motor Speedway
The Indianapolis 500, or Indy 500, is an annual event, but you can immerse yourself in the culture all year long. Take a track tour to step straight onto the course and get behind-the-scenes intel from guides who've been there when the checkered flag waves. ***indianapolismotorspeedway.com***

Strange Bird
Located in Irvington, Strange Bird is a quirky alternative to Midwestern brewery fare. Shrimp cocktails, house-made ramen and "landlocked exotica" rum cocktails whisk patrons off to the tropics. Craving some kick? Get the *tantan mazesoba* with extra Sichuan dust. ***strangebirdindy.com***



FROM TOP Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields; Bottleworks Hotel; Foxtail cocktail at Strange Bird

3 INDIANAPOLIS BUSINESSES

NASDAQ
OPENING
BELL
Angi
Nasdaq

Angi

Founded as Angie's List in 1995, this online service allows consumers to book certified professionals for home projects from landscaping to plumbing.

Republic Airways

Republic is one of the country's largest regional airlines, operating scheduled flights for American Eagle, Delta Connection and United.

STEAK N SHAKE

Steak 'n Shake

Since 1934, this casual national chain has enjoyed a loyal following for its signature Steakburgers and hand-dipped milkshakes.

IMAGES TOP LEFT: ERIC LUBRICK/VISIT INDY; CENTER LEFT: KENDALL MCQUAY; BOTTOM LEFT: REBECCA SHEHORN; BOTTOM RIGHT: JETCITYIMAGE/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES

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Paul Golitzin

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Wine Spectator | TOP **10**

2006 2013 2015 2022

QUILCEDA CREEK
QUILCEDA CREEK
COLUMBIA VALLEY
CABERNET SAUVIGNON

ENOLOGY

Broad Appeal

How pioneering Black winemakers are changing the industry—and reaching a new audience

CARLTON MCCOY would prefer not to be defined by his race. After all, the Washington, D.C., native's achievements—he became a Master Sommelier before age 30, and CEO of Lawrence Wine Estates and Heitz Cellar before 40—would be impressive regardless of his skin color. On the other hand, he acknowledges that his position as a leader in the wine industry carries extra weight because he's Black.

"I remember the first time I saw a Black person in a Tide commercial," McCoy says. "You go, Whoa, that whole time I never saw myself in that. And you start realizing that, when you achieve something—especially in a public light, where I am—it empowers other people to feel that it's possible."

Wine can be intimidating regardless of one's background—think back to the first time you looked at a restaurant wine list—but the industry remains especially daunting to people of color. Only two percent of wine professionals and 11 percent of wine drinkers identify as Black. There are, however, a growing number of Black winemakers and winery owners who are opening more inclusive hospitality spaces and helping to create career opportunities in the industry.

Take McCoy, who in 2020 cofounded The Roots Fund, an organization that introduces people of color to the business and provides educational scholarships. "It's a weird industry where there isn't a clear path," he says, "so we try to connect with communities and educate them on what the opportunities are. The first step is communicating verbally and visually that you're welcome, that we want you here." While McCoy got into the food and wine business early (he cooked for his grandmother's catering business as a teenager and later worked at fine-dining restaurants including Per Se), some of his fellow pioneers came from different industries—although those weren't necessarily diverse, either.

"I spent 30 years often being the only person who looked like me in a room," says David Drummond, a former senior vice president at Google who founded the winery Overshine last year. Drummond fell in love with wine during his years as a lawyer and executive, and in 2018 he bought the Las Cimas Vineyard in Sonoma County. After meeting Sam Bilbro and Thomas DeBiase of Healdsburg's Idlewild Wines, he decided to use the Las Cimas fruit in his own bottlings. (The trio now collaborates on three brands: Overshine, Idlewild and Comunità.)

While he wasn't intimidated by the prospect of getting into the wine business, Drummond says he sees how a person of color could be. "When I was learning more about the industry," he says, "one of the things that kept coming up was a pretty established winemaker saying, 'I just came out to California and knocked on doors and asked people, You need an intern?' And it occurred to me, most people of color, most women, would not do that. Once you see more people with a similar background, it empowers you to think, This is attainable."

Part of the disconnect, historically, is cultural. McCoy and Drummond didn't come from wine-drinking households. Neither did Deneen Brown, the CEO of Brown Estate, the first Black-owned estate winery in Napa Valley. Brown's parents, who spent their careers in the medical field, didn't aspire to make wine. They just wanted to own a family farm, and in 1980 they happened to fall in love with a property in Napa. So they grew grapes. The Browns sold that fruit to winemakers—until they realized how good it was.

IMAGES **LEFT: MIKE BATTEY; CENTER: JOSHUA HARDING; RIGHT: COURTESY OF BROWN ESTATE (2)**

STORY BY
JUSTIN GOLDMAN

"One of our buyers, a famous person, was keeping our fruit separate for a very special bottling," Brown remembers. Not long after that revelation, her brother began using those estate grapes to make his own zinfandel, which garnered impressive scores from *Wine Spectator*. This year, Brown Estate will mark its 30th crush, and the family has founded a second brand, House of Brown, and opened a tasting room in downtown Napa.

Speaking of hospitality spaces, they play a huge part in making wine appealing to a new audience. Drummond, whose brother is a jazz musician, has a soul music playlist going in Overshine's Healdsburg tasting room. "We wanted to really draw on that feeling of, You're having wine, you're with friends, you want to have a good time, you want to hear some music that you feel connected to," he says.

> "I spent 30 years often being the only person who looked like me in a room."

Brown agrees that spaces should be inclusive, but she doesn't believe wineries should focus on any one demographic. "This diverse, younger consumer that everyone's talking about has been way ahead of the industry," she observes. "They've been drinking wine and seeking it out. We've just created a place that's welcoming to anybody."

Inclusivity is noble, but it's also practical: Making a product more accessible means bringing in more customers. McCoy, for one, believes this is already happening.

"We're now seeing a very different identity of wine consumer," he says. "The idea that there was a certain look to a person who drank wine, talked about wine—it's changing dramatically now. And that makes for a much more exciting industry."

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP Brown Estate CEO Deneen Brown; House of Brown wines; Overshine founder David Drummond; Carlton McCoy, CEO of Heitz Cellar and Lawrence Wine Estates

ALL ABOARD

High Cuisine on the High Seas

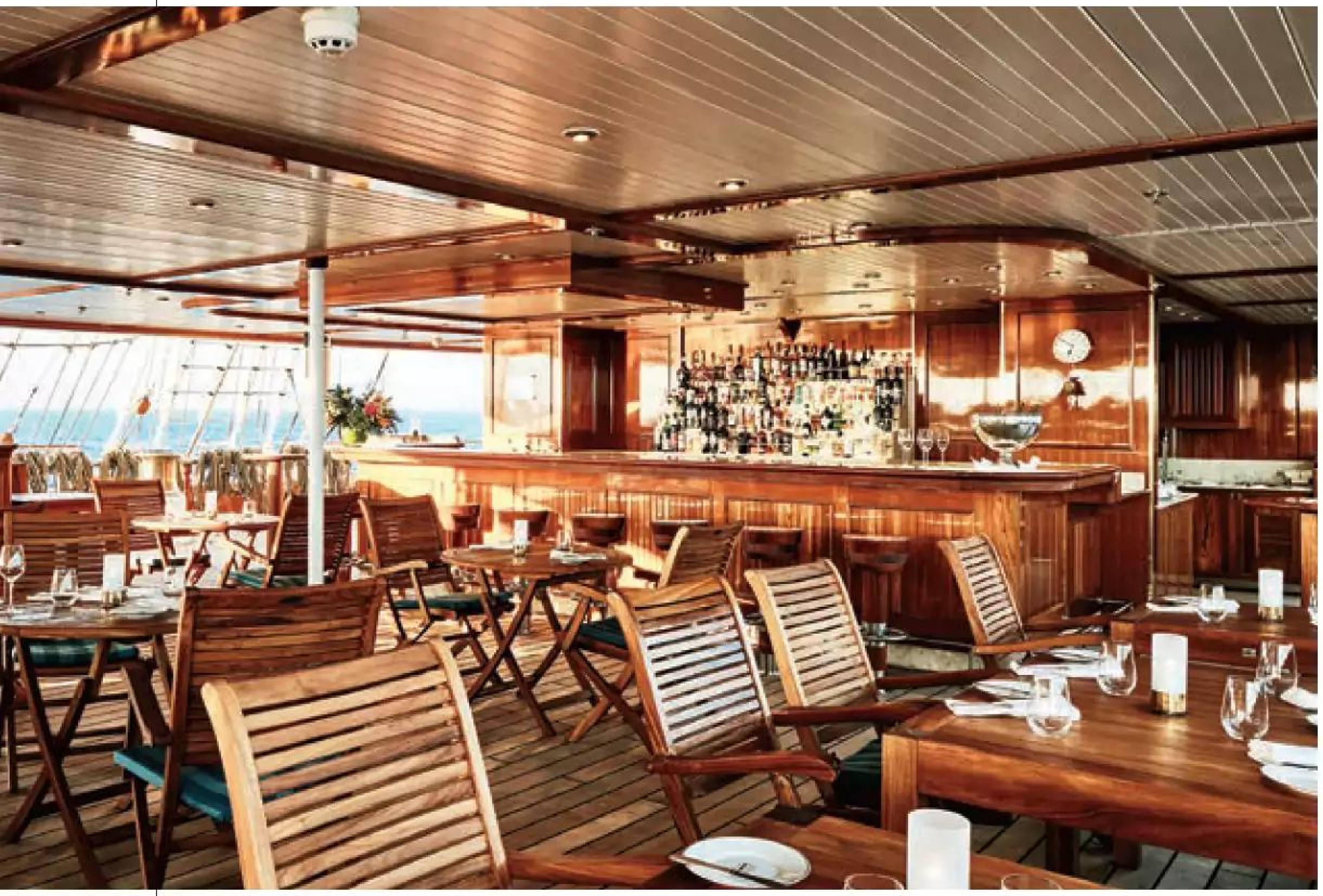
Sea Cloud Cruises brings fine dining to its elegant sailing experience

IF YOU'VE ever dreamed of traveling on a sailboat like they did more than a century ago, you can do so in great comfort and style with Sea Cloud Cruises, one of the world's great names in sailing. The original 94-year-old *Sea Cloud*, a four-masted ship that once served as a private yacht for Marjorie Merriweather Post, is the model for the company's sailing vessels. Still radiating the glamour of a bygone era, the first *Sea Cloud*, containing 32 cabins, continues to take guests to sea. The *Sea Cloud II*, built in 2001, is its younger sister, but despite the maritime family resemblance, it's more modern with technical advances. I recently sailed on the newer *Sea Cloud Spirit*, launched in 2021, to Costa Rica and the Panama Canal. Award-winning Miami-based chef Cindy Hutson was onboard for this amazing journey, delighting passengers with her humor, wit and delightful island cuisine.

The *Sea Cloud Spirit* is known for its culinary excellence, with changing daily menus featuring fresh-off-the-boat seafood, simply grilled or served in more sophisticated European preparations. Buffet-style breakfast and lunch, served alfresco or in the dining room, showcase grilled fish and meats and an extensive variety of cold appetizers, warm specialties and freshly churned ice creams.

As guest chef, Hutson impressed us with her Costa Rican coffee-and-cocoa-crusted

STORY BY
TERRY ZARIKIAN



> **The *Sea Cloud Spirit* is known for its culinary excellence.**

skirt steak, whose chipotle agave glaze added a sweet and spicy flavor to the tender certified Angus beef. Presented over boniato and sweet plantain mash, it is a dish she created at Coral Gables' Ortanique on the Mile restaurant, where she perfected her "cuisine of the sun" cooking. As soon as we docked in Costa Rica, she hit the local markets to curate the fish and produce, including malanga, boniato, plantain, chipotle, coconuts, yucca, mango, passion fruit, sweet peppers, oranges, lemons and limes. This focus on local ingredients was apparent in her dishes.

In Panama she created a *pescado encocado*, perfectly seared corvina fillet in fresh coconut milk, corn, *otoe* (Panamanian taro root), tomato and malanga mash. At a cooking demo she taught guests how to make a Panamanian cobia ceviche with sweet peppers, ginger, coconut milk and lemon, and for a Costa Rican rum tasting she prepared coconut-crusted shrimp with mango/passion fruit chimichurri, mojo braised pulled pork on crispy yucca cake with cumin aioli, and black-bean hummus with *patacon* (fried green plantain) with corn salsa and cilantro crema.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP
Lido Deck on the *Sea Cloud Spirit*; salmon eggplant timbale; Veranda Suite; *Sea Cloud Spirit*

IMAGES **LEFT: COURTESY OF SEA CLOUD CRUISES (4); BOTTOM RIGHT: EARTH PIXEL LLC/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO**

EXHIBITION

The Miami Boat Show Is Back

FOR BOATING and yachting enthusiasts, there's only one must-visit winter event in South Florida: the Discover Boating Miami International Boat Show. Following the combination of the Miami International Boat Show, SuperYacht Miami and the Miami Yacht Show in 2022, this five-day program has become the largest marine show in the world, attracting more than 100,000 attendees each year. The 2025 edition runs from February 12 to 16 and will feature over 1,000 exhibitors, from brokers like Ocean Independence and Italian Yacht Group to manufacturers such as Beneteau.

The Miami Beach Convention Center will display boats up to 49 feet and host exhibits for engines, electronics and marine accessories. Outside the convention center will be the Progressive Boat Show Experience at Pride Park, where visitors can enjoy educational seminars, hands-on activities and culinary experiences. Pride Park is also the site of the Nautical Ventures AquaZone, a 40,000-gallon freshwater pool for demos, testing and entertainment.

Just across Biscayne Bay—and connected by water taxi—Miami has four venues. At Herald Plaza, exhibits will include powerboats, motor yachts from 30 to 125 feet, engines, and marine accessories. For sailboats and catamarans, visit the Museum Park Marina. Attendees looking to get out on the water should visit the Venetian Marina, where they can test drive more than 75 vessels. And then there's Yacht Haven Grande Miami, home to SuperYacht Miami. Accessed via a separate ticket from general admission, this venue will display the show's largest and most luxurious superyachts. According to a 2024 report by Deloitte and the Italian Marine Industry Association, millennials are a growing clientele, and will soon comprise 60 percent of luxury superyacht owners. These buyers are also driving changes in design. They're looking for a greater connection with nature, seeking yachts with expanded outdoor space and large windows. And they also desire innovations in sustainability, from recycled materials to increased efficiency. ***miamiboatshow.com***

STORY BY
STEFANIE WALDEK

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(At Least They're Delicious Ones)

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STORY BY
MIKE JORDAN

TRAVEL

Atlanta

Where business flourishes in the Big Peach

FROM TOP
Lobby at Forth Atlanta; *kohada* at Mujo

IMAGES TOP: MATTHEW WILLIAMS; BOTTOM: ANDREW THOMAS LEE

THE LUSH tree canopy covering Atlanta and its surrounding metro area—population 6.3 million—might make it easy to believe this big city in a Southern forest is a bit sleepy. But business is booming in Georgia's capital, with an increasing number of major corporations joining Delta, Coca-Cola, UPS and The Home Depot in a transportation hub that moves millions of people and products around the region, nation and world.

That said, Atlanta certainly isn't an all-work-and-no-play kind of place—it was recently ranked as one of the top five most fun U.S. cities, thanks to a range of recreational opportunities that await after work hours. Here, learn more about what keeps business travelers coming back to Atlanta.

The Airport
Hartsfield-Jackson (ATL) continues to reign as the world's busiest airport by passenger volume, with more than 105 million travelers served annually and over $34 billion generated in economic impact. The first phase of a significant expansion of ATL airport's Concourse D, which will increase capacity and offer additional food and beverage options and added space in waiting areas and restrooms, was completed in September. Last year ATL opened Amex's 28th Centurion Lounge—its largest at 26,000 square feet and the first in the portfolio to incorporate outdoor space. Delta remains

king, with expectations to offer its biggest schedule to date this summer with 1.1 million weekly seats, 968 daily flights and service to 215 destinations, adding up to nearly 75 more daily departures compared to summer 2024.

Business Hotels
Just west of downtown, Signia by Hilton opened in 2024 with 976 rooms, more than 100,000 square feet of meeting space, a pedestrian walkway offering direct access to the Georgia World Congress Center, three restaurants, and three bars. Farther east is the buzzy Forth Atlanta, a luxury boutique hotel offering private club memberships and a more intimate space for conferences and gatherings, accommodating up to 400 in its dividable 9,700-square-foot ballroom.

Power Meals
The *Michelin Guide* arrived in Atlanta in 2023, awarding a single Star distinction to five restaurants, then expanding in 2024 for a total of nine starred establishments, four of which are omakase. The exceptional *edomae*-style sushi and service at Mujo in West Midtown won't disappoint for a one-on-one deal closer—although the availability of seating just might if plans aren't made weeks in advance. For something more soulful, call for a group accommodation at Southern National, where James Beard 2024 Semifinalist Duane Nutter leads a kitchen specializing in regional classics in the Summerhill community near downtown.

> The *edomae*-style sushi at Mujo won't disappoint.

Conference Centers and Venues
The Georgia World Congress Center Authority, which includes the Signia, Centennial Olympic Park and neighboring Mercedes-Benz Stadium, hosted more than 160 events in fiscal year 2024, generating $1.84 billion in economic impact. Options outside downtown include the Georgia Tech Hotel & Conference Center, located in Midtown. With 21,000 square feet of meeting space spread across 23 event rooms, proximity to various parts of the city, and an adjacent food hall, it's a popular complex for meetings among tech and start-up businesses. The 400,000-square-foot Georgia International Convention Center, accessible by a complimentary two-minute ride from Hartsfield-Jackson via the ATL SkyTrain, offers 150,000 square feet of exhibit space, 16,000 square feet of meeting space, and 2,000 parking spots, with four hotels connected to the SkyTrain and two more under construction.

BELOW
Mercedes-Benz Stadium; Centurion Lounge at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport

IMAGES TOP: ALEX SLITZ/FIFA/GETTY IMAGES; BOTTOM: COURTESY OF CENTURION LOUNGE ATL

SANDY POWELL

TOP
WARDROBE
OVER 9 CUBIC FT.

PHOTO BY TIM WALKER

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CANDY LAND

Sweet Dreams

Resorts and spas are increasingly incorporating chocolate and cacao into their treatments

IF YOU have a sweet tooth, you shouldn't feel any guilt enjoying your beloved chocolate bars. Cacao beans are full of iron, potassium and magnesium—not to mention a host of antioxidant and skin-boosting benefits. That's why spas and skincare brands around the world now use cacao and cocoa (processed cacao beans) to sweeten the self-care experience. I indulged in this treat myself in one of Africa's most historic, and now most sustainable, chocolate hubs: Príncipe.

A century ago, São Tomé and Príncipe, a twin-island nation off the coast of Central Africa, was the world's largest chocolate producer. However, that title came with a somber history. In the late 1400s, Portugal colonized the Gulf of Guinea islands. Centuries later, they imported cacao trees from Brazil, and ferried over enslaved people from West Africa to create a new industry. The plants thrived and cacao boomed thanks to the region's volcanic soil.

In 1975, when São Tomé and Príncipe gained its independence from Portugal, the cacao plantations were left largely abandoned. Decades later, the crop has made a major comeback—although this time, the local people (many of whom are descendants of enslaved Africans) are leading, and benefiting from, its production. HBD Príncipe—a sustainable hotel and agroforestry brand—uses both ecotourism and responsible agroforestry, including cacao production, to provide local income while safeguarding the rich biodiversity on the Edenic island of Príncipe.

HBD Príncipe runs luxury hotels across the island of Príncipe (with one on São Tomé),

IMAGES **TOP: COURTESY OF FAENA HOTEL MIAMI BEACH; BOTTOM: JOE THOMAS**

STORY BY
STEPHANIE VERMILLION

CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT Cakes and toppings at Sundy Praia, Príncipe Island; Tierra Mar spa at Four Seasons Resort Cabo San Lucas at Cabo Del Sol, Mexico; Tierra Santa Healing House at Faena Hotel Miami Beach, Florida

Bolo Salgado
Muffin
Bagel
Bolacha de
Doce de leite
Noel

and maintains its own small sustainable cacao plantations—the first in Africa to be Bird Friendly-certified by the Smithsonian Institution. The brand uses its own harvested beans, as well as cacao it purchases from local farmers, for everything from hotel dining to small-batch chocolate production to, my favorite, the decadent wellness experience.

"Cacao has properties that leave the skin with a velvety texture," says Gilberto Ceita, supervisor of the wellness team at HBD Príncipe's most luxurious escape, **Sundy Praia**. This boutique jungle-meets-beach resort is a roughly 20-minute hike from the brand's artisanal chocolate production site, Roça—once the largest cacao plantation on the island.

Guests can reduce stress via the cacao massage.

Sundy Praia's spa incorporates cacao and cocoa as well as other local products like coffee into many of its treatments. The Ritual Despertar do Príncipe experience uses coffee for exfoliation during the massage, followed by a mask of Príncipe cacao and a banana-leaf body wrap to leave guests glowing and refreshed. The Bombom di Maiá ritual blends sustainable cacao and coconut oil for an exfoliating and endorphin-releasing session that hydrates and regenerates the skin while preventing signs of aging.

And the forest-to-body offerings extend beyond the spa walls. HBD Príncipe's line of Paciência Organic body products, such as the all-natural body scrub made from beeswax, coconut oil, roasted cocoa and vanilla, left my skin so revitalized and dewy I purchased multiple jars to maintain the glow back home. If reaching this paradisiacal chocolate hub—a journey that requires a roughly seven-hour TAP Portugal flight from Lisbon, then a 30-minute flight from São Tomé—isn't in your near future, you can enjoy cacao's wellness wonders closer to home.

The **Body by Brooklyn** spa in New York City adds the ingredient to its B3 Signature Chocolate Exfoliation & Hydrating Wrap to minimize cellulite, aid circulation and bolster cell regeneration. **Faena Hotel Miami Beach** also harnesses cacao in its Tierra Santa Healing House. Guests can reduce stress via the signature cacao massage, along with myriad other therapies, such as healing rituals.

Down in Mexico, the new Tierra Mar spa at the **Four Seasons Resort Cabo San Lucas at Cabo Del Sol** uses sustainably sourced ingredients treating wellness seekers to a host of cacao offerings. The Terapia De Cacao therapy offers a calming cocoa wrap to aid relaxation and revitalization, while the Flores Del Desierto facial's cocoa mud mask helps guests achieve that sweet skin glow.

And over in Colombia, the Caribbean Sea-view **Hilton Cartagena** runs a "cocoa tribute and massage" session in its Privilegio Wellness Spa. The decadent offering starts with body exfoliation using cocoa granules and Colombian coffee, followed by a body wrap with warm and natural cocoa, a 30-minute massage, and a Turkish bath as the cherry on top.

IMAGES COURTESY OF SUNDY PRAIA

THREE HEALTHY CHOCOLATE BRANDS

Hu

This brand is one of the first chocolatiers to offer healthy, guilt-free sweets. Sold in more than 34,000 stores, this dark chocolate is made with three ingredients: cacao, coconut sugar and cocoa butter. *hukitchen.com*

Alter Eco

Alter Eco not only uses natural ingredients from plant extracts, spices, fruit bark and roots, but its packaging is also 100-percent compostable. Products include organic quinoa and granola for added crunch and texture. *alterecofoods.com*

Chocxo

Cookies & Creme, dark chocolate peanut butter and peppermint are just a sampling of the flavors Chocxo creates. Products contain no artificial sweeteners and are all low in sugar. *chocxo.com*

—EDEN HERBSTMAN

WINTER MUST-VISITS

Florida Days, Australian Nights

An international list of stylish spots

Loews Coral Gables Hotel

2950 Coconut Grove Dr., Coral Gables, FL

LOCATED AT The Plaza Coral Gables, this 242-room hotel offers robust amenities and comfort. Rooms and suites are designed with contemporary furnishings, and select accommodations include a balcony or terrace or direct access to the ninth-floor pool. For private events and meetings, the Alhambra ballroom and 15,000 square feet of outdoor space are ideal. On the leisure front, a fitness studio and spa provides rest and relaxation. Restaurant Americana Kitchen fuses fine dining with classic American dishes, while the lobby's Americana Bar serves handcrafted cocktails. ***loewshotels.com***

IMAGES TOP AND BOTTOM: MORIS MORENO; INSET: PABLO MEDINA

STORY BY
EDEN HERBSTMAN

1 Hotel Central Park

1414 Sixth Ave., New York City

WOODED LIKE Central Park, this property's eco-themed aesthetics abound from the lobby to the guest rooms and suites. Accommodations feature minimalist furnishings and pine accents. A new addition is the 2,871-square-foot Park Penthouse, offering an outdoor terrace and complimentary use of an Audi e-tron. Work-conscious elements range from large in-room desks to private rooms and meeting spaces. For dining, chef Jonathan Waxman's revamped Jams presents seasonal New American cuisine.

1hotels.com

The Georgian

1415 Ocean Ave., Santa Monica, CA

THIS ART deco property from the 1930s features 56 guest rooms and 28 suites, with interiors that blend glamour with functionality. This month, The Georgian is a draw for Frieze Los Angeles attendees. On-site cultural perks include The Library, curated by Arcana, and Gallery 33, which hosts rotating exhibitions. Savor beach views and coastal Italian dishes at Sirena, and be transported to Hollywood's heyday at the dimly lit Georgian Room, specializing in steak and pasta.

thegeorgian.com

Pontchartrain

2031 St. Charles Ave., New Orleans

FOR A refined stay, this grande dame is a gem. Guests are instantly enveloped in the hotel's timeless style and European flair. More than 100 rooms and 23 suites are furnished with plush velvet beds, sofas and antique cabinets. As the property is adjacent to the city's streetcar route, forego ride-sharing and hop on to see the local sights. Still, you'll be tempted to linger at the hotel for food and beverage offerings that celebrate the best of the bayou.

thepontchartrainhotel.com

> Swank furnishings embody the brand's bold ethos.

The StandardX

62 Rose St., Melbourne, Australia

THE STANDARD Hotels are expanding internationally with their X collection, servicing a younger generation of business and leisure travelers. The Melbourne location is in the Fitzroy neighborhood, famed for its music and subculture, which inspires each of the 125 rooms. Accommodations are intentionally minimal, but include essentials for a productive stay. A cherry-red entrance door and swank furnishings embody the brand's bold ethos. Restaurant Bang serves Thai street food. Don't skip the rooftop bar for city views.

standardx.com

IMAGES **TOP LEFT: COURTESY OF 1 HOTEL CENTRAL PARK; TOP RIGHT: DOUGLAS FRIEDMAN; BOTTOM LEFT: JASON THOMAS CROCKER PHOTOGRAPHY; BOTTOM RIGHT: COURTESY OF THE STANDARDX MELBOURNE**

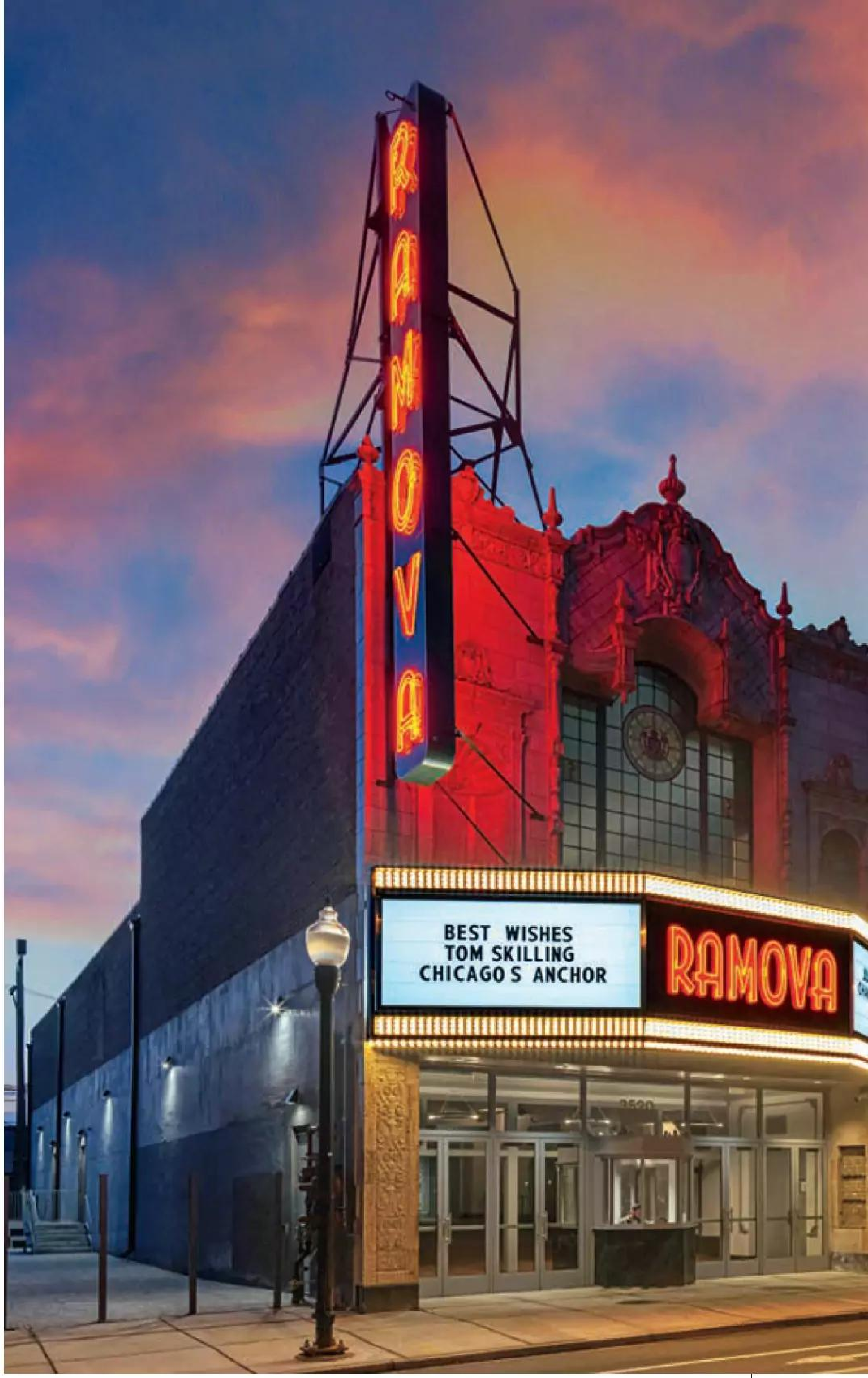
EXCLUSIVE

DREAM WEAVER

EGOT WINNER AND ENTREPRENEUR JENNIFER HUDSON ON GIVING BACK, CREATING CONNECTION AND MAKING THE BEST OF EVERY MOMENT

STORY BY
L'OREAL THOMPSON PAYTON

IMAGES **JAY L. CLENDENIN/CONTOUR RA/GETTY IMAGES**



LONG BEFORE Jennifer Hudson made her big-screen debut as Effie White in the movie adaptation of *Dreamgirls*, she was a little girl with big dreams of her own. Counting Aretha Franklin, Mariah Carey and Whitney Houston among her musical idols, Hudson got her start in the church choir and also enjoyed doing community theater.

Today, Hudson is an Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony (EGOT) winner, nationally syndicated talk show host and producer. One could assume she has achieved all her dreams. But those assumptions would be wrong.

"I'm your dream girl," Hudson tells *Business Traveler*. "I'm always dreaming."

Among those dreams is adding another EGOT to her name and expanding her production credits. She'd also like to add director to her already impressive résumé.

"I was able to achieve my personal dreams by the time I was 30," she says. "Now I'm 43 and God has blessed me with so much more beyond what I could dream. But you will always see me try and I'm open to what's next."

In one of her initiatives, Hudson joined fellow Chicagoans Chance the Rapper and the late Quincy Jones in becoming owners of the city's historic Ramova Theatre, which served as the primary movie theater for the Bridgeport neighborhood from 1929 to 1985. After lying dormant for nearly 40 years, the theater reopened in December 2023 as a live music venue with a restaurant, beer garden and brewery.

"It's a community thing. I like having those places where we can come together as a community on the South Side," says Hudson. "As an artist, I would love to see more events being held in Chicago. And being in the company of the great Quincy Jones and Chance…well, I wouldn't have missed that opportunity to see us Chicagoans come together in that way." And though Hudson's award-winning eponymous talk show films in Burbank, California, it's not uncommon for Chicago residents to see the star walking around the Windy City.

"Chicago will always be home," she says. "Sometimes people are surprised to know I still reside in Chicago, but I would never change that. I go everywhere and wherever my work leads me, but Chicago is home."

It's that hometown pride and investment in her community that inspires Hudson to constantly give back to the city that raised her and the children who live there. "My heart is with the children," she says. "I love to do anything to brighten the future, to let our kids know it's never too early to start dreaming."

In 2009, Hudson, along with her older sister, Julia, founded the Julian D. King Gift Foundation in honor of her seven-year-old nephew, Julian King, who was slain alongside her mother and brother. The foundation gifts Chicago children in need with school supplies and Christmas presents.

In addition to the foundation, Hudson has donated to numerous causes, such as the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Make-a-Wish

IMAGES **TOP LEFT: COURTESY OF @IAMJHUD; TOP RIGHT: ERIC LAIGNEL; BOTTOM: RAY MICKSHAW/WIREIMAGE/GETTY IMAGES**

> “I’m your dream girl. I’m always dreaming and open to what’s next.”

Foundation and Stand Up to Cancer through her partnership with Mastercard. The latter has also included the Strivers Initiative, with the credit card working with the Fearless Fund—a venture-capital group supporting awareness of women- and minority-owned businesses—to provide visibility, funds and financial tools to small businesses involved in arenas such as beauty and retail. Hudson has been the public face of the project, which has donated more than $125,000.

But she’s not stopping there. Hudson also has a deep desire to support children in the arts. “It was the arts that kept me in school,” she says. “I had perfect attendance because I didn’t want to miss music class. I want to see the arts in schools, so I put my focus in that area. All of this has been motivated by what I love and what I’m passionate about.”

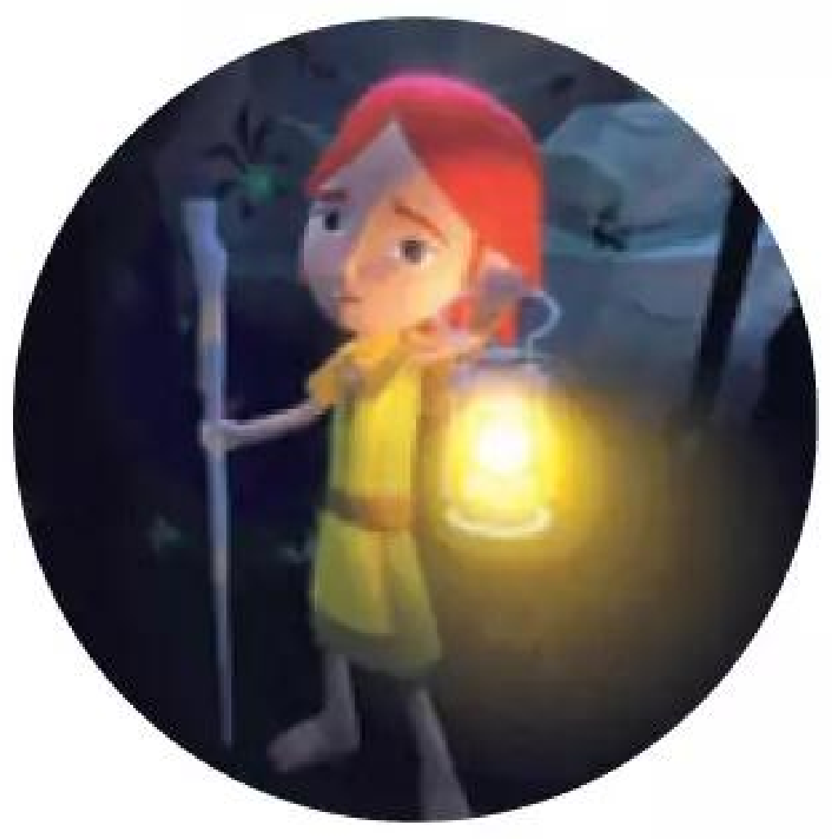
And there’s nothing Hudson loves more than creating a sense of home and connection wherever she goes, including the set of her daytime talk show, which she lovingly refers to as “The Happy Place.” If you’ve spent any time on social media in the last year, chances are you’ve seen celebrities walking, dancing

ABOVE Chicago’s Ramova Theatre, which Hudson reopened with Chance the Rapper and Quincy Jones **LEFT, FROM TOP** With her EGOT awards (Emmy, Grammys, Oscar, Tony); first capturing the nation’s attention on *American Idol*, 2004

IMAGES **TOP TO BOTTOM: BAOBAB STUDIOS, JENNIFER HUDSON, PHOTO 12/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; JEMAL COUNTESS/GETTY IMAGES**

FAB FOUR

Hudson’s EGOT Wins



EMMY

Baba Yaga (producing)

Hudson scored a Daytime Emmy for her work executive-producing this 2020 VR film. Based on Russian fairy tales, it also featured her voice.

JENNIFER HUDSON

GRAMMY

Jennifer Hudson

Hudson captued her first Grammy for her 2008 debut album. She also won Best Musical Theater Album for the 2015 revival of *The Color Purple*.

OSCAR

Dreamgirls

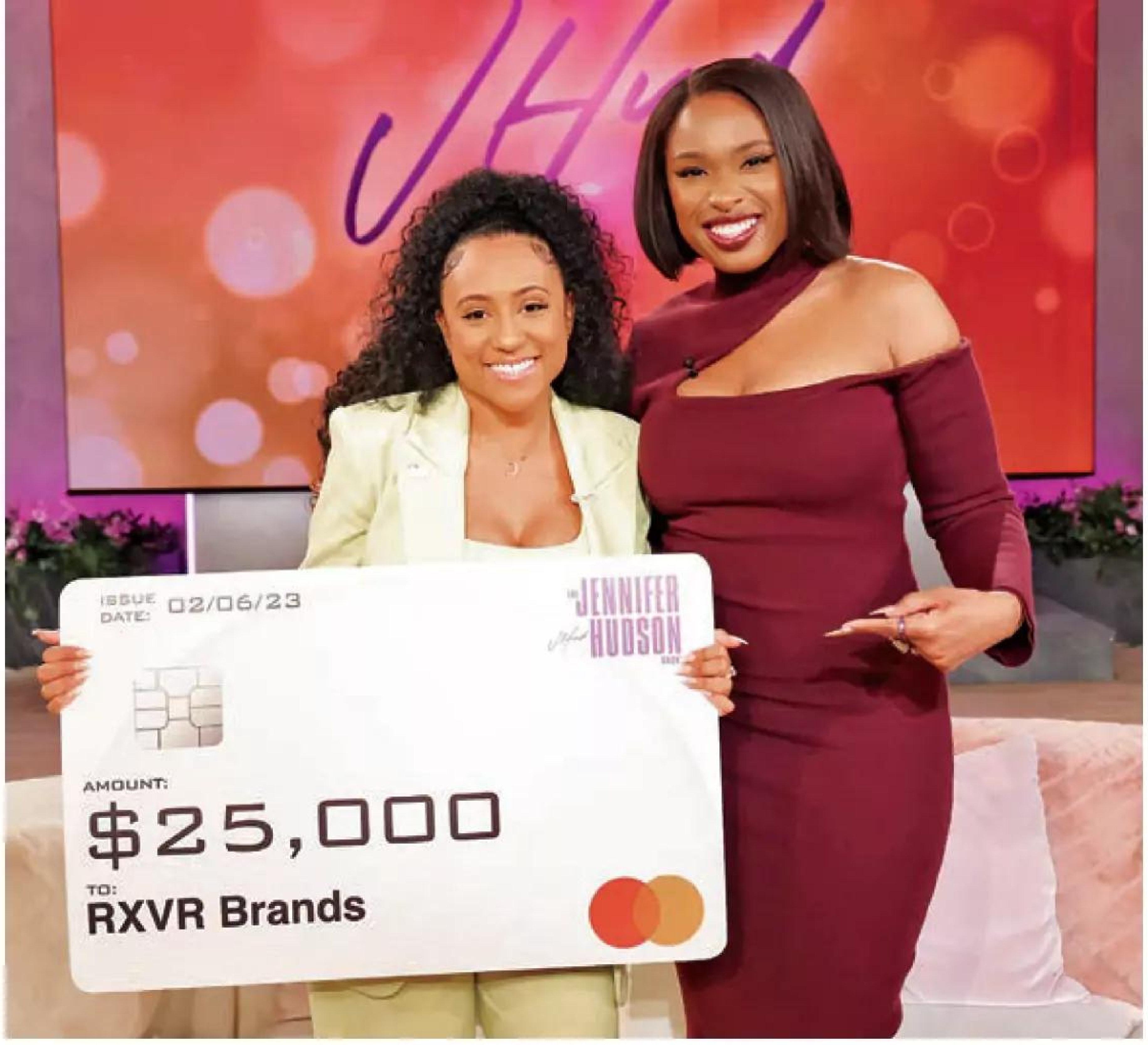
Hudson was named Best Supporting Actress for the 2006 film version of the Broadway hit (above with Beyoncé Knowles and Anika Noni Rose).

TONY

A Strange Loop (producing)

In 2022, Hudson achieved EGOT status by coproducing Michael R. Jackson’s acclaimed show, which won Best Musical.

> “Don’t expect other people to create your dream for you. You get to dictate that.”



Mastercard and Hudson partnered to donate $25,000 to Rhonda X to invest in her virtual reality development and marketing company, RXVR Brands

and strutting their way down the infectious “spirit tunnel” on the set of *The Jennifer Hudson Show*. Before meeting the host, guests are enthusiastically greeted by staff members with an original song and rhythmic handclaps.

“I love singing and celebrating, so the staff and crew put the two together,” she says. “When I was getting ready to walk out on stage, they were singing to me. That’s the spirit of the show. We just like to make everybody feel celebrated and loved when they come through. I like every place to feel like home. I don’t know any other way than to create a family environment.”

Since premiering on Hudson’s 41st birthday in 2022, *The Jennifer Hudson Show* has earned an NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Talk Series and has been nominated for several Daytime Emmy Awards. In addition to serving as the show’s host, Hudson is also an executive producer of the show.

“Everyone has their idea of what success is,” she says. “But to me, it’s when I meet whatever goal I set out to do personally. So there is no one set formula.”

With so many accolades, it would be easy for Hudson to get swept up in her success. But she maintains that staying present through it all is key.

“I make the best out of every moment I’m in and give every bit of it my all,” she says. “I’ve found the best way to do it is as my grandma used to say: Take it one day at a time, one step at a time.” For those who hope to follow in her footsteps—whether as an entertainer or entrepreneur—Hudson’s advice is to remember your why and not become discouraged when challenges inevitably come your way.

“If you keep at it, it has no choice but to give in,” she says. “And once you show your value, people have no choice but to allow you space. Create your own space and your own lanes. No matter what we do or who we are, you have to remember why you do what you do. That can give you the energy to keep moving forward.

“God placed me there, and I have no choice but to be prepared,” she continues. “When I look through our human eye, that’s what we call our passion. But when I look through my spiritual eye, sometimes these things are assignments and they’re bigger than us. Know that you deserve to be where you are. So many naysayers are telling us what we can and can’t do. I must’ve done something worthy enough for me to be here. So you have to know that you deserve to be where you are. You have to trust in that, too.”

To her younger self, the 21-year-old who auditioned for the third season of *American Idol* back in 2003, Hudson would say: “Stay every bit of who you are. It’s okay to be who you are.”

“Through life, sometimes we get weary and don’t trust ourselves,” she says. “Don’t expect other people to create your dream for you. People will try to tell you how your dream is supposed to go, but no, you get to dictate that.”

Next month, Hudson will expand her credits once more as a producer for the Broadway musical adaptation of *Smash*, the NBC series she appeared on in 2013. As for what the rest of 2025 will hold, Hudson is looking forward to more joy, more traveling and more aspirations. “I’m excited to see what all it has in store and dream up new dreams.”

FAMOUS FACES

Be Her Guest

The Jennifer Hudson Show **stands out from other talk shows with its signature “spirit tunnel,” through which guests are introduced to energetic chants and songs. From her first guest—*American Idol* judge Simon Cowell—through to such names as Kim Kardashian, Blake Shelton and Shaquille O’Neal, Hudson has welcomed a spectrum of celebrity, even hosting Michelle Obama on a recent holiday show.**

CLOCKWISE FROM NEAR LEFT With Ted Danson, Morgan Freeman, Snoop Dogg and Cori Broadus, and Michelle Obama

IMAGES TOP: CHRIS MILLARD/WARNER BROS; BOTTOM LEFT: MITCHELL HADDAD/WBTV/GETTY IMAGES; BOTTOM RIGHT: CHRIS HASTON/WBTV/GETTY IMAGES (3)

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WELL WISHES

Increasingly, business travelers are looking to sustain healthy habits on the road—and airlines, destinations and employers are helping them

STORY BY **FATIMA DURRANI**
ILLUSTRATION BY **YO HOSOYAMADA**

WHAT DO travelers fear most? Beyond long lines, lost luggage or TSA delays, a quieter, more persistent worry looms: staying healthy during long-haul flights. It's not just cramped seats or altitude-induced headaches—it's the challenge of maintaining wellness amidst jet lag, fatigue and disrupted routines.

For today's business travelers, the stakes are even higher: delivering peak performance while navigating the physical toll of global travel. With wellness emerging as a top travel priority, both individuals and companies are redefining how to stay fit, focused and resilient on the road.

The concern of wellness goes beyond just body aches from cramped seating, headaches and ear congestion from altitude changes, or general motion sickness. Business travelers frequently experience "performance anxiety" as well, and the fatigue from insufficient sleep while hopping between flights only exacerbates the issue. According to Dr. Mark Fischer, regional medical director for International SOS, "Insufficient sleep can significantly impair focus, productivity and overall cognitive performance, especially for business travelers managing demanding schedules."

To counteract the effects of inadequate rest, travelers should prioritize sleep, take short naps and enhance their sleeping conditions with items

> **“Don’t hesitate to ask your company for a business class seat to rest well on a long-haul flight.”**

such as noise-canceling headphones, eye masks and neck pillows to create a more comfortable environment during flights. “For frequent travelers, especially those who often take long-haul flights, disruptions to the body’s natural circadian rhythms can worsen jet lag, making sleep even more essential,” says Amanda Al-Masri, vice president of wellness at Hilton. “Research shows that tools like sleep apps—offering guided meditations, white noise and sleep tracking—can significantly aid in promoting relaxation and improving rest.” Al-Masri notes that Hilton has embraced these scientific findings through initiatives like a Sleep Retreat hosted at one of its properties in Hawaii in collaboration with Dr. Rebecca Robbins, a sleep science expert.

Other health issues can completely interfere with a trip, such as the risk of blood clots or an asthma attack due to changes in air quality. “During long-haul flights, passengers can decrease the risk of deep vein thrombosis by staying hydrated, changing positions in the seat or walking around the aircraft often, and wearing light compression stockings,” Fischer adds.

Food allergies are another hazard. “Increasingly, most urban destinations worldwide highlight diet-friendly options within their menus,” says Matt Burdette, VP of business development USA at The ASA Group, a leading travel security firm. “It is worth researching several options in advance of your trip around your planned locations.”

Luckily, while travelers may not be able to control crowded airports or the change in time zones on long-haul flights, they can control their approach to wellness. The key is to start preventive routines before the flight, such as adequate hydration and skimming back on salt, and maintain them during the flight.

The Savvy Traveler

The concept of wellness has democratized access to all kinds of health and healing methods. After years of isolation and lockdown, business travelers are demanding to “travel with purpose,” protect the environment, and focus on mental health, sleep and self-care.

“Today, wellness is everywhere, as travelers seek inventive ways to enhance their personal well-being,” says Cathy Feliciano-Chon, managing partner of Finn Partners’ global travel practice. In fact, the Global Wellness Institute has valued the wellness tourism sector at $830 billion, with projections to reach $1.4 trillion by 2027. Traveler preferences and behaviors are indeed evolving.

“I try to stick to a routine when I travel, similar to at home. My vitamins, digestive enzymes and water intake schedule don’t change just because I’m traveling,” says frequent flyer Kimberly Evans, CEO of Purposed Consulting in Frisco, Texas. “I’ve always used hand sanitizers, but after Covid, I’ve upped my game, such as asking the air hostess or waiter to bring me a cup of boiling water, in which I place my utensils first, and then wipe them with a paper napkin.”

The hospitality industry, too, has become savvier. According to Jodi Fernandez, director of global sales at Hyatt’s Wellbeing Collective, the hospitality company now offers everything “from in-room Peloton content to get the morning started to complimentary mindfulness content via Headspace to help wind down for a good night’s sleep.”

Designated quiet spaces, frequency-inspired music and sounds, smart lighting, biophilic designs and green spaces in airports are all in the making. On the aviation front, cutting-edge technologies are being developed to enhance passenger well-being. For example, Qantas is expected to introduce its long awaited Project Sunrise Airbus A350-1000 planes to ease jet lag, which will fly from Australia to London and New York nonstop starting next year. These aircraft will include an innovative onboard Wellbeing Zone, specifically designed to promote physical movement, stretching and hydration throughout lengthy ultra-long-haul flights. As explained by Qantas, “Situated between the Economy and Premium Economy cabins, the Wellbeing Zone serves as a dedicated space for passengers to engage in specially curated guided movements showcased on large, easy-to-view monitors. In addition, travelers can indulge in a variety of healthy refreshments, creating an atmosphere of relaxation and rejuvenation.” This area will be available to passengers across all classes, ensuring everyone can benefit from a more enjoyable travel experience.

FROM ABOVE Kilolani Spa at Grand Wailea, Maui, Hawaii; First Class cabin on the upcoming Qantas Project Sunrise Airbus A350-1000

IMAGES TOP: COURTESY OF KILOLANI SPA AT GRAND WAILEA; BOTTOM: COURTESY OF QANTAS

The Future Is Bright

According to the Global Business Travel Association, "A rising share of buyers (52 percent, up from 44 percent in 2023) predict an increase in their corporate travel budgets to support customer-facing meetings, sales initiatives, conferences and internal collaborations."

Before Covid brought the world to a halt, travelers relied mainly on themselves when it came to wellness during a business trip. Packing gluten-free snacks or taking a yoga class during lunch break came instinctually for some. But for many, there was no time to ponder potential airborne health hazards. It was just something to "get through."

The pandemic gave wellness a kick start, and we saw everything from functional medicine to the gut-brain axis being explored. And it wasn't long before companies began to understand the value of having healthy travelers.

According to Travelport, "35 percent of business travelers say their biggest priority is having options that support well-being and productivity and aid recovery." However, these options often depend on a company's culture and attitude toward traveler well-being. "Corporate travel policies that are shifting towards a more holistic approach consider individual well-being and allow traveling employees to take advantage of options that support their comfort, convenience and personal time," says Jennifer Catto, chief marketing officer at Travelport.

"For many, this could mean handier departure times or meeting schedules or incorporating more time for recovery after a long flight or train ride. The goal is to encourage a more positive business travel experience while causing less of an upheaval to one's personal life, which will enhance overall job satisfaction."

You and Your Company—a Partnership

Business travelers need to excel while also requiring support. According to Wellhub, 78 percent believe their employers should assist with their well-being, and 79 percent would consider leaving a company that does not prioritize it.

"Asking your company to provide an allowance to hit a local gym or buy some dumbbells to use in your hotel room is reasonable," says Monica Steiner, a three-time World Women's Physique/Figure bodybuilding champion and avid traveler, who also coaches businesses on wellness. According to Sanctifly, 26 percent of business travelers express concerns about lack of exercise while on trips. Twenty-five percent of respondents expressed a desire for exercise gear in their hotel rooms.

Surprisingly, only 10 percent of employers offer this option. "You could also request a portable TENS unit to ease pain and discomfort on a long-haul flight," adds Steiner's husband, fellow bodybuilder and black belt martial artist Dr. Greg Steiner.

Using technology is a traveler's best friend, so don't hesitate to invite your company to provide apps. For example, while managing jet lag can be done with adequate hydration and nutrition, travelers can also take advantage of cutting-edge apps such as Uplift. "It offers a natural science-backed solution to combat jet lag by aligning your body's rhythms and clock systems to your new time zone using the precision nerve stimulation of pressure points," says CEO Ted Finn.

A Brave New World

Remote work policies, staying green, digital nomadism and insurance mandates are major drivers of a new kind of business travel. Increasingly sophisticated policies go beyond travel vaccines and the occasional spa massage, but it's up to the traveler to communicate preferences to the company. "If you're expected to hit the ground running and have an extremely packed schedule, don't hesitate to ask your company for a business class seat so you can stretch out and rest well on a long-haul flight," says Evans. Business travelers must be at their best, and corporate wellness departments are advocating for them. No one wants to travel and come home sick with weakened immunity. Fortunately, demystifying wellness on the go isn't hard, and taking care of yourself shouldn't be, either.

Welcome onboard

TRAVEL

DEAL IN THE SUN

STORY BY
TODD PLUMMER

IMAGES COURTESY OF THE RITZ-CARLTON, ST. THOMAS

Why the Caribbean is the ultimate business getaway this winter

AHH, THE CARIBBEAN, where pristine beaches offer a draw for leisure travelers in search of tropical bliss. But while many of us associate the area with turquoise waters, luxury resorts and R&R, the region has also been hard at work on appealing to a new type of traveler—one who takes their rum punch with a side of networking and dealmaking.

As the beneficiary of a suite of duty-free programs and trade agreements with the United States, the Caribbean is no stranger to American business. While it's long been a zone of opportunity for the flow of capital and tradable goods, the region has also taken on a new mantle in recent years: as the ideal place for a conference, meeting or business trip. And with the global business travel market forecasted to exceed $928.4 billion by 2030, the Caribbean is making moves to claim its piece of the pie.

The growth of business travel hasn't been a mere case of scaling what already exists, however. Since the pandemic, the proliferation of remote work has spurred a reevaluation of how and why businesses, their constituents and their clients convene. Yes, the enormous turnkey conference centers are still there, but we're also seeing boutique properties cater to this increasingly lucrative market. Convertible indoor and outdoor spaces, private villas for the most exclusive of board meetings, and a range of trendy amenities offer new ways for the expense-account set to reach new highs of productivity—rum punch in hand, of course.

IMAGES LEFT: COURTESY OF THE STRAND TURKS AND CAICOS; RIGHT: COURTESY OF THE RITZ-CARLTON, ST. THOMAS

TURKS AND CAICOS

A NEW COMMUNITY WITH A SUSTAINABLE BENT

● Just opened in November, **The Strand Turks and Caicos** is a luxury resort community located on 2,230 feet of oceanfront on Providenciales. An array of serviced suites, villas and private residences provides flexible options for group bookings. The resort also bills itself as one of the most sustainable in the Caribbean. Solar integration provides more than 75 percent of the community's power, and a partnership with the Denver Butterfly Pavilion will make this the first designated "pollinator sanctuary" in the region.

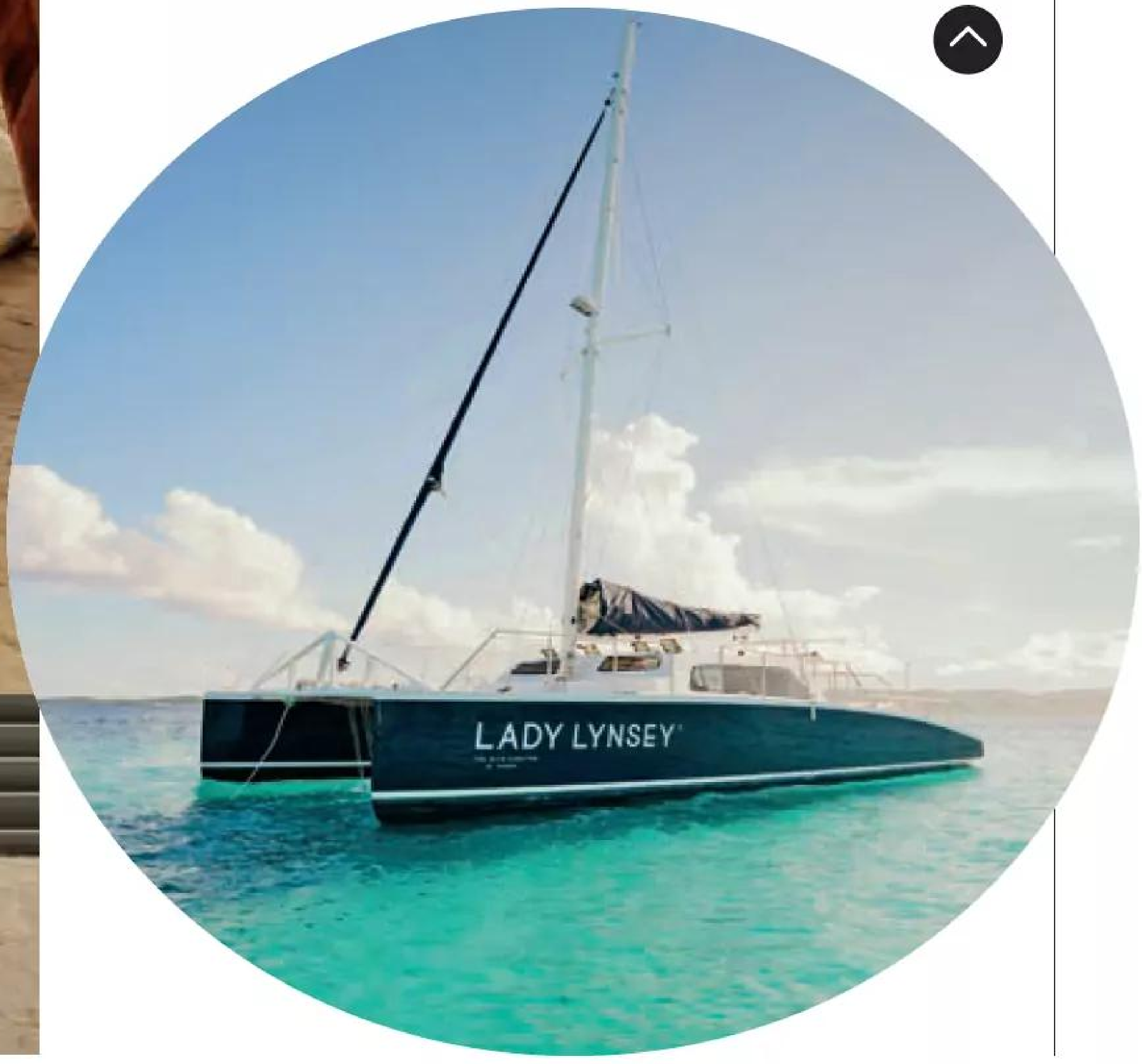
FROM LEFT Luxury residence at The Strand Turks and Caicos; the *Lady Lynsey II* at The Ritz-Carlton, St. Thomas **OPENING SPREAD** The Ritz-Carlton, St. Thomas

VIRGIN ISLANDS

A NEW ERA FOR BOTH THE U.S. AND BRITISH V.I.S

It took years for the Virgin Islands to fully recover from the one-two punch of hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017, and the glittering restoration of **The Ritz-Carlton, St. Thomas** continues to lead the way back. The property benefits from 10,000 square feet of versatile, state-of-the-art indoor and outdoor event space—which now includes, as part of its renovation, the *Lady Lynsey II*, an exclusive 65-foot house catamaran. So not only would a conference here benefit from some of the most robust routes to major mainland cities, but you could also take the team building out on the water.

For more intimate corporate gatherings, look to the British Virgin Islands, where **Rosewood Little Dix Bay** on Virgin Gorda last year unveiled one of the most exclusive rentals in the Caribbean: Villa Katsura, spanning an impressive 23,500 square feet with five bedrooms and ten and a half bathrooms. The $19,000 nightly rate (five-night minimum) includes two dedicated butlers, semiprivate beach access and complete support from the resort team to make all your meetings and dining experiences utterly seamless.



ST. BARTHS

"BILLIONAIRE'S ISLAND" IDEAL FOR BUSINESS

● This French overseas collectivity might be more known for its superyachts and champagne (the Eden Rock St. Barths just became the first hotel in the world to partner with Krug), but there's something about its je ne sais quoi atmosphere that lends itself to business travel, too. At the recently renovated Le Toiny, a Relais & Chateaux property located on the quiet side of the island, deputy general manager Adolfo Acampora has seen an uptick of corporate groups seeking smaller, more exclusive boutique properties for their meetings and retreats. He has organized poolside dinners for *Fortune* 500 CEOs, and can seat up to 100 in the hotel's restaurant. "It is fascinating to see how business trips in St. Barths are different from anywhere else in the world," says Acampora. "After all, while St. Barths is known as a 'billionaire's island' with luxury hotels and gourmet restaurants desirable for impressing clients, the island's small size provides a sense of privacy and security, ideal for discreet business meetings and avoiding unwanted attention."

ST.KITTS

A HIDDEN GEM WHERE EVERY ROOM IS BEACHFRONT

● Despite being a resort operated by a globally recognizable brand, the **Park Hyatt St. Kitts Christophe Harbour** still feels like a best-kept secret. It's located near one of the Caribbean's better deepwater ports, and offers dramatic views of neighboring Nevis. The resort offers 124 spacious beachfront accommodations, each with a private balcony or terrace, and it just unveiled three newly renovated villas. Corporate travelers can also make use of the 3,712-square-foot Banana Bay Ballroom that can be divided into three distinct rooms, the Beachfront Lawn for open-air receptions, or—once business is done—basketball and pickleball courts, as well as a Topgolf Swing Suite. Best of all, it's part of the World of Hyatt program, making it an ideal spot to accrue (or spend) those well-earned loyalty points.

IMAGES **TOP: COURTESY OF LE TOINY; LEFT: COURTESY OF PARK HYATT ST. KITTS CHRISTOPHE HARBOUR ; RIGHT: TONY ARRUZA**

“Business trips in St. Barths are different from anywhere else in the world.”

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT Le Toiny, St. Barths; Altos de Chavón amphitheater, Casa de Campo, Dominican Republic; Beachfront Lawn, Park Hyatt St. Kitts Christophe Harbour

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

A CARIBBEAN CLASSIC GAINS MOMENTUM

The D.R. has benefited from one of the strongest post-pandemic rebounds in the region, with 2024 tourism numbers soaring past both 2023 records and 2019 levels. For a grande-dame-style experience, the iconic **Casa de Campo** resort—which offers some of the best golf in the Caribbean, and has hosted the likes of Michael Jordan, Beyoncé and several U.S. Presidents—just celebrated its 50th anniversary. The resort continues to be a prime destination for corporate groups, offering an array of hotel rooms, suites, casitas and over 70 serviced villas, as well as meeting spaces and a dedicated planning team to coordinate experiences from horseback riding to tennis lessons.

The beauty of the D.R. is its diversity of offerings, which span large-scale hotels suited for the biggest groups to more under-the-radar spots—like the buzzy **Cayo Levantado Resort.** Located off the Samaná Peninsula along the country’s sleepy northern shore, this property provides the personalized service of a private island resort, yet with 218 rooms, also features the scale to accommodate larger groups. The resort’s Yubarta wellness center offers breath-work treatments, sound healing and introductory meditation workshops so your team can prioritize rest and mindfulness after even the most productive of meetings.

EXOTIC
excursions

IMAGES COURTESY OF THE COVE

> As part of the resort's recent renovation, The Cove created an expanded boardroom that can seat 30 people.

THE BAHAMAS

SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW

If the Caymans are the Caribbean's intimate tax haven, the Bahamas are its sprawling, choose-your-own-adventure one. With more than 700 islands (30 of which are inhabited), there are multiple approaches to take for your next work trip. Don't assume **Sandals Royal Bahamian** is just for honeymooners—this adults-only resort located 15 minutes from Nassau's Lynden Pindling International Airport recently debuted an all-new, 15,483-square-foot convention center that can accommodate up to 1,000 guests. Book one of the top-tier suites and you'll be chauffeured around in the house Rolls-Royce. After your conference, extend your trip by a night or two and enjoy exclusive access to the private offshore island Sandals Barefoot Cay.

Looking to really impress your colleagues? Plan an intimate board meeting at **The Cove** on Eleuthera. Each year, Lenny Kravitz (who owns a home on the island) brings his personal dentist there to offer free care to the community, and The Cove provides complimentary space to offer this service. As part of the resort's recent renovation, The Cove created an expanded boardroom that can seat 30 people with a full AV system—up to Kravitz's specifications, of course.

Or if you really have a bonus to spend, you can take a private jet, helicopter, seaplane or ferry over to the tiny island of Bimini for team drinks at the new **Bonito.** This St. Barths icon made history this month by opening a second location on Bimini, inside the new Banyan Tree Bimini Resort & Residences development. That forthcoming resort spans an impressive 750 acres (nearly one-sixth of all of Bimini), and will feature a five-star hotel, overwater bungalows, a private 18-hole golf course and a superyacht deepwater marina—with sections debuting in 2026 and a grand opening projected for 2027. You'll just have to plan a return trip for the full experience then.

ST. MARTIN

THE RESORT THAT PUTS THE BUZZ IN TEAM BUILDING

If memorable team-building exercises are your MO, consider La Samanna, a Belmond hotel. This luxe, European-style resort just underwent a redesign of its eight beloved multibedroom villas—book all eight, including round-trip airport transfers and 24-hour Villa Host service, so your group's every need will be handled. But it's the new bee-themed wellness experiences that will be most memorable, including "bee-watching" sessions and therapeutic craft workshops using wax from the hotel's on-site apiary. Getting to the island is easier than ever, too, thanks to the newly rebuilt terminal at Princess Juliana International Airport, with direct flights from Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Charlotte, Miami, Atlanta and more.

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE La Samanna, St. Martin; Woto restaurant at The Westin Grand Cayman; The Cove, Eleuthera, Bahamas

CAYMAN ISLANDS

THE GRANDE DAME OF CARIBBEAN BUSINESS TRAVEL

Looking to close a deal? Do it in the Caymans, where an essentially nonexistent tax environment makes transacting as easy as ordering a margarita. Located directly on prime Seven Mile Beach, **The Westin Grand Cayman** offers some of the best meeting space on the island: a Governor's Ballroom with 5,600 elegant square feet framed by floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the Caribbean Sea; the Governor's Lawn for an outdoor oceanfront setting; or the more intimate Galleon Ballroom, offering 2,600 square feet of meeting space. If you book the Presidential Suite for a private in-room team dining experience, the resort throws in a cocktail-making class from one of its award-winning mixologists. The Westin isn't just about prime conference space, however—it also offers unique team-building experiences in step with current leisure travel trends, such as pickleball, guided meditations at sunrise, and beachside workouts by mainland favorite F45 Training.

IMAGES **TOP:** COURTESY OF LA SAMANNA, A BELMOND HOTEL, ST. MARTIN; **BOTTOM:** JANET JARCHOW

SPONSORED CONTENT

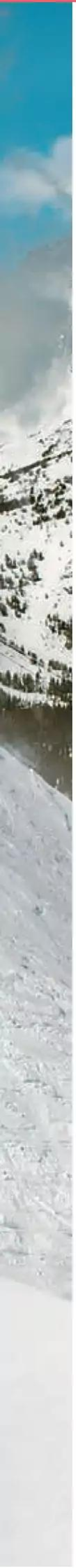
PEAK SEASON

With over three million acres of wide-open wilderness to explore, Mammoth Lakes, California is elevating ski vacations to extraordinary new heights

WHETHER YOU'RE A seasoned pro or you've yet to pull the tags off your fresh new ski gear, Mammoth Lakes offers an unforgettable experience both on and off the slopes. Boasting an average of 400+ inches of snow per season and over 300 days of sunshine every year, this west coast wonderland is a go-to for thrill-seekers all-year round, placing it in peak position on bucket lists the world over. Framed by boundless acres of national forest, your adventures won't stop at the summit. Here, 140 miles of cross-country trails are yours to explore, with countless activities held for the après crowd, too. Early snowfall this year has jump-started the '25 season, so if you're thinking of taking to the slopes, Mammoth Lakes is the place to be.

STAY IN STYLE

Mammoth Lakes is a rural retreat, but that doesn't mean comfort is out of the equation. From luxury properties to charming motels and cozy cabins, there is a style for everyone. Prepare for a unique nature-first experience as you unwind beneath bluebird skies and overlook snowy mountain ridges. With your destination



> ‘Mammoth Lakes is one of the best natural retreats in the world’

locked in, you can opt for a stress-free arrival with a shared or private shuttle service from the airport. Plus, for those traveling by car, there are plenty of convenient parking options.

AN UNREAL WORLD

The moment you arrive, it becomes clear why Mammoth Mountain deserves its grandiose name. Standing at over 11,000 feet with a 3,100 vertical drop, this is the highest chairlift-accessible ski resort in California, making it the obvious choice for getting in those incredible snowscape views. Paired with a signature California sunset, Mammoth Lakes offers a landscape like no other. An impressive 25 lifts and 178 trails service the mountain, with all 3,500 acres of skiable terrain divided into expert, advanced, intermediate and beginner territory. At Mammoth Mountain, no one is left behind at the lodge.

BEYOND MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN

About half an hour north of Mammoth Lakes is June Mountain, another must-visit summit. With roughly half the skiable terrain of its sister resort, June Mountain provides a more relaxed, intimate skiing experience, perfect for those seeking space when starting out. Mammoth Lakes is much more than a skier’s paradise. There are so many ways to explore the area. From tubing at Woolly’s Adventure Summit to ice-skating at the Olympic-sized LA Kings Ice rink, there’s no end to the activities. If you’re looking for somewhere to start, the Town Loop multi-use pathway is a popular bet. This 7.8-mile, family-friendly route lets you explore Mammoth Lakes at your own pace, with the flexibility to choose sections that fit your itinerary.

APRÈS, YOUR WAY

There’s a reason everyone loves the slopes, and it’s not only to do with the skiing. Mammoth Lakes is known for having a great off-mountain atmosphere and activities that keep guests coming back season after season. After hitting the slopes, make sure to experience the après scene at Canyon Lodge or explore The Village at Mammoth, a walkable haven filled with shops, snacks, and drinks to unwind after a thrilling day on the mountain. Plus, their town hosts a tight-knit community of restaurants, pubs and bars for you to enjoy. Whether you’re indulging in the ambiance of a steakhouse like Morrison’s Restaurant and Bar or enjoying a local brew at Mammoth Brewing Company, no two days in Mammoth Lakes are the same.

If you’re ready for the ultimate winter getaway, start planning your Mammoth Lakes trip at VisitMammoth.com

The seasoned skier’s checklist

Lift tickets

Ikon Pass holders enjoy unlimited access to Mammoth Mountain. Alternatively, you can buy same-day lift tickets at the lodge or save by purchasing online in advance. Mammoth lift tickets also grant access to June Mountain for a change of scenery.

Equipment

Opting out of buying brand new ski gear is an easy way to save on space and money. Renting is a great sustainable alternative and, fortunately, Mammoth Lakes has this covered. Everything from skis and snowboards to snowshoes are available on-site so you don’t have to worry about squeezing things into your suitcase.

Visiting times

Thanks to its High Sierra climate, Mammoth Lakes enjoys one of the longest ski seasons in the country, often skiing into July, so there’s truly never a bad time to visit. But when it comes to hitting the slopes, there are midweek advantages. You can enjoy cheaper lift tickets, fewer crowds, and more runs – what’s not to love?

Mammoth Lakes
CALIFORNIA

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LOUNGE REVIEW
Casa del Ron
Guatemala City

HOTEL REVIEW
The Dorchester
London

BAR REVIEW
Press Club
Washington, D.C.

CABIN REVIEW
Korean Air
Prestige Class

Tried & Tested

Expert takes on this month's essential places and products

IMAGES COURTESY OF LAND ROVER

AUTO

Red Hot

The new Range Rover Sport is an ideal vehicle for town and country

READ THE REVIEW

Elements of Style

A classic property is splendidly updated in the heart of Mayfair

WELL-HEELED global travelers are likely to be fans of the Dorchester Collection, a group of luxury properties famed for their impeccable service, refined style, see-and-be-seen spots to dine and imbibe, and amenities such as destination spas. Each has a distinct personality, from the legendary Hôtel Plaza Athénée in Paris with its facade of red flowers to The Beverly Hills Hotel with its Polo Lounge, a favorite of the Hollywood set.

In London, the competition among high-end properties is stiff. I've had the good fortune of staying in some of the best, but based on a recent experience, I can tell you The Dorchester is a standout.

Though The Dorchester opened in 1931, dated it's not, and the property recently unveiled a significant renovation that makes it even more relevant. Pierre-Yves Rochon, the sought-after design firm, has reimagined the interiors to reflect a fresh perspective on 1930s glamour. Shades of gold, green and blue are prevalent, as are an abundance of fresh flowers and soft wood finishes.

The 241 spacious guest rooms and suites evoke apartment-style living. Taking their inspiration from an English garden, they feature leaf-green and pink colorways (some suites have hand-painted headboards). All offer roomy desks for working, comfortable chairs for lounging, and large windows that

IMAGES **COURTESY OF THE DORCHESTER LONDON**

> Though The Dorchester opened in 1931, dated it's not.

allow plenty of natural light to filter in.

In addition to being redesigned, the accommodations have been enhanced with soundproofing, state-of-the-art technology and upgraded air conditioning. If I hadn't been in London, a city I can't get enough of, I would have happily stayed in my large suite overlooking Hyde Park, changed into the cozy oversized bathrobe and enjoyed a well-executed room-service meal followed by a long soak in the white-marbled bathroom tub. The space was truly a retreat, and other aspects of the property were equally on point.

Let's start with the five restaurants and three bars. The impressive lineup includes the three-Michelin-starred Alain Ducasse at The Dorchester; The Grill by Tom Booton, serving modern British food under the helm of the eponymous talented chef; and the art deco-inspired Cantonese spot China Tang at The Dorchester.

The Promenade, a hallmark of the hotel since its inception but now completely redone, is the place for high tea or a casual lunch and a prime venue for people-watching. I ate a delicious salad with grilled chicken here, surrounded by fashionable Londoners who were clearly repeat diners based on their familiar interactions with the staff.

Speaking of the staff, no matter whom I encountered, everyone was warm, genuine and ready to help with any request. Vesper Bar, a glamorous watering hole designed by Martin Brudnizki, features an outstanding list of cocktails, wines and spirits. A new addition to the property is the Lalique-crystal-decked Artists' Bar. For hard-to-resist pastries, cakes and gorgeous bouquets, there's Cake & Flowers, another post-renovation debut.

As a spa junkie, I would be remiss if I didn't mention The Dorchester Spa, which has a fantastic gym, of-the-moment features such as quartz beds, relaxation loungers aimed at reducing stress and increasing awareness, and an expansive list of treatments from facials to massages. The Dorchester's general manager, Luca Virgilio, says that wellness is "a big priority" for the hotel. He also emphasizes how business-friendly it is: The property has ten spaces for meetings and events, and the concierge team can loan guests computers and provide office supplies.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Hyde Park Suite; Alain Ducasse at The Dorchester restaurant; afternoon tea at The Promenade; Artists' Bar; Liberace's piano at Artists' Bar

IMAGES TOP LEFT: MARK READ; COURTESY OF THE DORCHESTER LONDON

BEST FOR

Classic style infused with a contemporary edge. Situated in Mayfair on Park Lane opposite Hyde Park, the hotel has an enviable location in the heart of London's action.

VERDICT

Dorchester Collection hotels cater to the business set in addition to leisure travelers. The Dorchester in London is exceptional in meeting guests' needs who are in town for work yet still looking for fun. ***dorchestercollection.com***

MIAMI TO SEOUL

Dream Journey

A nostalgic, supremely comfortable transpacific flight aboard the legendary "Queen of the Skies"

KOREAN AIR'S daily route from Atlanta (ATL) to Seoul Incheon (ICN) is a key link between the U.S. and Asia, forming part of its joint venture with Delta Air Lines. This partnership allows Korean Air to deploy its Boeing 747-8, while Delta operates the Airbus A350-900 on the same route. Flying the latest variant of the "Queen of the Skies" has always been a dream of mine, and this was the perfect opportunity to experience Korean Air's Prestige business class on the airline's longest flight.

Check-In

My journey began in Miami, where Delta's partnership with Korean Air allowed me to check my luggage directly through to Incheon, making the transfer in Atlanta seamless. Upon arriving at ATL, I tried the Centurion Lounge but found it overcrowded. The nearby Delta Sky Club in Concourse F provided a quieter spot to enjoy breakfast and relax before my flight.

Boarding

Boarding commenced promptly at 11:40 a.m. As a business class passenger, I was among the first to board and was thrilled to step onto the Boeing 747-8. Welcomed at the door by three smiling flight attendants, I was directed to the stairs leading to the upper deck, a quieter space configured exclusively for business class in a 2-2 staggered layout, ensuring direct aisle access without disturbing a neighbor.

On the lower deck, four rows of 2-2-2 seating and one row of 2-2 make the cabin less private, although the seats are spacious and staggered, similar to those upstairs.

The Seat

Korean Air's 747-8 Prestige business class seats, manufactured by B/E Aerospace, offer impressive privacy and storage, especially for window seats, which come with spacious bins. My seat provided a perfect view of the aircraft's massive wings and engines. My wife sat just beside me in an aisle seat, separated by a privacy divider that could be electronically raised. Even without the partition, the setup felt secluded, and the four large windows beside me emphasized the spaciousness of the seating area.

Equipped with a 21-inch width and a fully flat, 78-inch-long bed mode, the seat included all essentials: a plush pillow, slippers, an

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT
Korean Air chose the B/E Aerospace business class seat for its Prestige cabin on the 747-8, seen at right; bibimbap

amenity kit and a menu detailing the meal services. In-flight entertainment came via a 18-inch HD touch screen that was accessible using a remote control. Each seat featured universal AC and USB-A sockets, keeping devices powered for the 14-hour journey.

Our flight attendant, Woorin, introduced herself and spoke perfect English. Her warmth and professionalism added a personal touch to the experience. Recalling a delicious bibimbap from my previous flight on Korean Air 11 years ago, I chose it again for my main course. She warmly acknowledged my selection, saying, "Excellent choice!"

The Flight

Pushback was on schedule at 12:45 p.m., and by 1 we were airborne. The hum of the four engines was exhilarating, marking the start of a truly special journey. Twenty minutes after takeoff, Woorin began the first meal service by setting my table with a crisp white linen and offering a fresh towel.

The meal commenced with an eggplant and zucchini appetizer, followed by a seared tuna salad with a sesame dressing and a hearty tomato soup with warm bread and French butter. The main course, my anticipated bibimbap, arrived beautifully arranged with traditional elements such as steamed rice, fish broth and Korean chili paste (gochujang). The fresh ingredients and authentic flavors brought back fond memories, and Woorin's continuous champagne service added to the experience. To complete the meal, a cheese platter and fresh grapes was served, followed by a decadent lemon tart cheesecake, Häagen-Dazs vanilla ice cream and freshly brewed Starbucks coffee.

After the meal, I settled in with an episode of *Top Chef* on the oversized screen. Later I changed into pajamas—my personal long-haul travel ritual—and drifted off, sleeping for nearly eight hours. The immensely wide seat provided ample space, allowing me to move around without any restriction. In contrast, today's modern seats tend to be narrower, making it difficult to move freely.

Korean Air is one of the world's three operators of the Boeing 747-8.

One drawback I noticed was the absence of a mattress pad, which would counteract the stiffness of the seat and contribute to a more comfortable sleep. I have been informed this will be available soon as part of the airline's premium hard product.

When I awoke, Woorin was ready with the second meal service. My table was once again elegantly set, and I enjoyed a bright citrus salad with oranges and grapefruit paired with a refreshing San Pellegrino. For the main course, I chose a delightful beef bourguignon with vegetables and potatoes. Woorin rounded off the service with warm cookies for my wife and fresh fruit for me, along with a cup of coffee.

Arrival

Before landing, I changed back into my clothes. Despite the comfort, the 747's environmental system lacked the advancements of newer aircraft. Unlike the humidified cabins of the Boeing 787, the 747 left my skin feeling quite dry. After expressing gratitude to the attentive crew and lovely purser, we touched down smoothly in Seoul, concluding a memorable flight aboard one of aviation's most beloved aircraft.

BEST FOR

SkyTeam frequent flyers looking for a premium and nostalgic journey across the Pacific, especially those seeking Delta connections from major U.S. hubs to Asia. The 747's unique upper deck and seamless service make it a top choice for long-haul travelers.

VERDICT

Korean Air's Prestige business class on the Boeing 747-8 delivers a premium long-haul experience backed by excellent service and a comfortable, spacious and private seat. Although the 747-8 is a pleasure to fly, its environmental system could be improved by advancements present in newer aircraft. Nevertheless, if given the opportunity to fly it again, I would gladly take it without hesitation. With the airline's new Prestige 2.0 cabin on the 787-10, Korean Air is well-positioned to stay competitive in the transpacific business travel market.
koreanair.com

IMAGES **COURTESY OF KOREAN AIR**

STORY BY
ENRIQUE
PERRELLA

Casa del Ron Aeropuerto
Guatemala City

Rum Diary

A premium lounge showcasing one of Guatemala's signature spirits elevates the experience at La Aurora International Airport

FOR YEARS, travelers passing through Guatemala City's La Aurora International Airport have lamented the terminal's outdated facilities and lack of charm. However, the Casa del Ron Aeropuerto lounge emerges as an oasis, offering a sophisticated retreat with an exceptional culinary and cocktail experience that pays homage to Guatemala's rich heritage.

Location

Situated by Gate 6 adjacent to the terminal's food court, Casa del Ron is housed within the Zacapa Rum store. This unique setting showcases one of the world's most celebrated rum brands alongside other local labels, lending an unmistakable sense of place.

Access Options

Access is seamless for Priority Pass holders, LoungeKey members, Diners Club cardholders and passengers flying Business Class with Iberia.

The Lounge

Upon arrival, visitors are greeted by a stunning staircase lined with historic Zacapa rum bottles, setting the tone for the lounge's aesthetic.

The entrance features rows of wooden rum barrels and a glowing backlit Zacapa logo. Spanning 6,700 square feet, the lounge is divided into three distinct areas. A sleek restaurant-style section features a striking triangular table surrounded by high chairs, with a centerpiece display of Zacapa's finest labels. Here, attentive hosts guide patrons to their tables for an à la carte dining experience. The second area is cozier, with a mix of plush couches, tables and walls adorned with photos detailing Zacapa's rum production process. The third section is a streamlined runway area with work-friendly stations equipped with charging ports, ideal for business travelers. With a capacity of 170 seats, the lounge ensures a comfortable experience for its guests.

Food and Beverage

The lounge's pièce de résistance is its remarkable food and drink offering, combining complimentary options with premium upgrades, delivering a gastronomic experience that rivals top-tier restaurants. As a self-professed Zacapa enthusiast, I tried two signature cocktails. First came the Zacapa Express, a cold-brew coffee cocktail blended with rum, sugar syrup and 70-percent cocoa, served in a martini glass. This cocktail offered a remarkably smooth and indulgent start. Later on, I tried the Zacapa Sour, a refreshing concoction of rum, sugar syrup, orange liqueur and lemon juice garnished with orange zest, providing the ideal midday pick-me-up. Both were masterfully crafted, with the Zacapa Sour emerging as my favorite. The bar also features creations spotlighting Guatemala's other premium rum, Botran, alongside the country's top gin brand, Xibal, and classic cocktails.

For lunch, I chose the *cochinita pibil* tacos, a standout dish featuring tender, slow-cooked pork served on house-made corn tortillas, complemented by avocado sauce and pickled onions. Quite simply, they were among the best tacos I've ever had. Other tempting options from the extensive menu included a tenderloin panini, carpaccio focaccia and a spinach and quinoa salad for lighter appetites.

FROM TOP
Zacapa Sour; scramble toast breakfast; lounge seating

Amenities

While compact, the lounge offers essential amenities, including complimentary high-speed Wi-Fi and clean restrooms. However, it lacks shower facilities.

BEST FOR

Enjoying a full preflight meal and premium beverages, especially before U.S.-bound flights, which are often treated as regional routes by American carriers operating at La Aurora.

VERDICT

Casa del Ron Aeropuerto elevates the experience at La Aurora, providing an authentic taste of the country's finest offerings. With its exquisite cocktails, impeccable service and standout culinary options, this lounge sets a high bar for airport hospitality. Casa del Ron is a journey into the heart of Guatemala's vibrant culture. ***prioritypass.com***

IMAGES COURTESY OF CASA DEL RON AEROPUERTO

Range Rover Sport

STORY BY
JEREMY TAYLOR

Town and Country

Range Rover's new model triumphs on both city streets and open highways

MORE ATHLETIC than a full-size Range Rover, the dynamically designed Sport is a hugely desirable SUV—with a premium price to match. Civilized on the inside, brutishly quick when required, Land Rover's compact all-wheel drive offers a youthful alternative to its larger sibling.

Key to that fresh-faced appeal is a lineup of exciting engines. The entry-level P360 six-cylinder has 355 horsepower on tap, while the plug-in hybrid P550e is even punchier and enjoys an estimated 51 miles of electric-only range—perfect for city commutes.

This may be a sporty SUV but comfort isn't compromised, thanks mainly to adjustable air suspension. Range Rover Sport will happily rise up and plough across a dirt field, then go down and provide confidence-inspiring handling on the road. An optional Stormer Handling Pack adds rear-wheel steer for precision turns.

The Sport's minimalist cabin is a favorite. Swathed in quality leather, a streamlined dashboard is mostly devoid of physical buttons, while subtle chrome trim adds an aura of refinement. Choose the air purification system to reduce urban pollution.

Land Rover's best model does look expensive alongside rivals such as the Mercedes GLC and BMW X5, but it's also easier on the eye. Sport prices start from $83,700 but expect to pay more than double that for some uprated SV (Special Vehicle) versions.

Luxuriously appointed and fashionably chic, the latest Range Rover Sport is equally at home downtown or hacking across country. Add a dash of genuine performance and there's little not to like. *landroverusa.com*

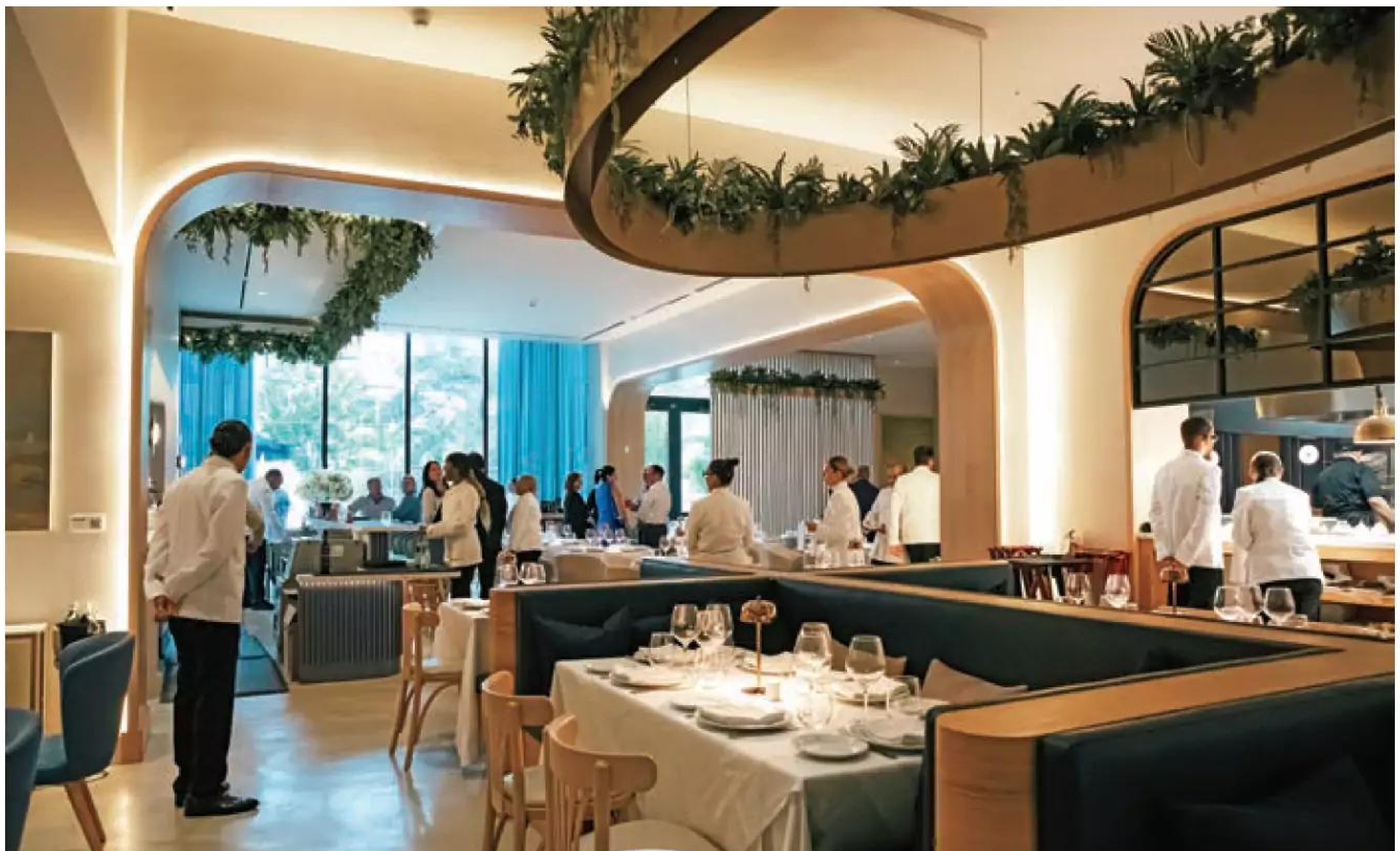
RANGE ROVER
ABF 112

STYLE MEETS SUBSTANCE
The Range Rover Sport features a sculpted grille with carbon-fiber finishes, while the cabin incorporates black ceramic details

IMAGES **COURTESY OF LAND ROVER**

STORY BY
TERRY ZARIKIAN

Piegari Ristorante Miami



Buon Appetito

An Argentine favorite brings high-end Italian fare to Miami's Wynwood district

I WAS SURPRISED that a high-end Italian restaurant had quietly opened in Miami's bohemian Wynwood, a signal that the area is evolving and might be redefining itself. A visit to Piegari brings instant gratification with a carpaccio *di pesce*, paper-thin salmon, frisée and fresh orange segments, and a burrata with prosciutto di Parma and arugula. We also enjoyed a warm fritto misto, delicately fried calamari, shrimp and zucchini accompanied by a *pomodoro* dip, and *polpettine della nonna*, which combines pork, cow and veal served with fresh ricotta.

Salads might appear as something one can have anywhere, but the Pacifico with smoked salmon, arugula, egg, cherry tomatoes and Parmigiano cheese, dressed with lemon oil, is perfect before digging into the pasta course. And here is where one has a hard time making decisions: The unique fettuccine *al nero di seppia* features squid-ink fettucine and sweet baby shrimp tossed in a creamy lemon garlic sauce with red caviar. The rich and hard-to-stop-eating tortellini *verdi alla valdostana* is stuffed with Gruyère cheese and served in a creamy béchamel sauce. And the pappardelle *al funghi* combines the wonderful bite of freshly made pappardelle, perfectly cooked al dente, with a wild mushroom and garlic sauce with fresh black truffles. If unsure, the Piegari Pasta Tasting offers the fettuccine *al nero*, corde *di chitarra* (guitar string pasta with fresh tomatoes and black olives) and spinach ravioli with pink sauce.

At this point we were full, and we never sampled the dried pasta section of the menu. I would have loved to have tried the linguine *frutti di mare* (with assorted seafood), the spaghetti *alle vongole* (spicy clam sauce), *cacio e pepe* (rigatoni with black pepper and pecorino Romano) and *paccheri all'aragosta* (Maine lobster with *paccheri* pasta and lobster bisque sauce). There are also plenty of risottos and appealing entrées, such as pollo alla tutti—organic chicken with red peppers, cherry tomatoes, black olives and portobellos in a demi-glace sauce—and the crispy veal Milanese, simply dressed with arugula and tomato. Fish lovers, don't fret: Chilean sea bass encrusted with pistachio is enrobed in a white wine lemon sauce, while red snapper *alla livornese* comes in a sumptuous fresh tomato-white wine-*taggiasca* olive sauce enhanced with briny capers. Gelato *del giorno*, a giant serving for the table, could be the best dessert, but there are also cannolis, profiteroles, *meringata* with strawberries, and even a homemade flan with cream and dulce de leche, so don't think I am keeping secrets from you!

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Carpaccio *di pesce*; dining room; fettuccine *al nero di seppia*

BEST FOR

Family reunions. Everyone gets to eat what they want, and sharing is the best way to try it all!

VERDICT

If you have heard about Piegari Buenos Aires, you can now enjoy the same homemade artisanal pasta in Miami. The luxurious dining room is unpretentious and welcomes big groups, as well as cozy romantic couples, for special occasions and celebrations.
piegariristorante.com

IMAGES @BAUTIESTRADAS

STORY BY
TERRY
ZARIKIAN

Drinking Song

A record-themed lounge in the nation's capital seduces with smooth sounds and cocktails

A BRAINCHILD OF two extraordinary bar veterans—Will Patton, the beverage director behind D.C.'s Michelin-starred duo, Bresca and Jônt, and Devin Kennedy, who shook up NYC's hip Pouring Ribbons and the Panorama Room—the dreamy and relaxing Press Club is an intimate subterranean lounge located in the epicenter of the capital's Dupont Circle neighborhood. This new record bar, similar to a "listening room," the Tokyo-ignited trend that lately has infiltrated New York nightlife, features a considerable collection of vinyl records and well-curated mixes of vintage disco, jazz and Brazilian spins. Press Club worked with a consultant for its music program, but Kennedy is often found manning the vinyl station. Most days of the week are dedicated to a different genre, with the flexibility to change the track to meet the moment.

"Sitting in silence and appreciating the record is cool, but just not what we wanted in a bar," Kennedy says. "Music is a focus but not *the* focus. Cocktails are.

"In that same way our menus explore the boundaries of an enhanced imbibing experience," he continues. Thoughtful details, fabrics and materials conjure an aesthetic that embodies both '70s discotheque and the warmth of a living room, with the dimly lit ambiance, dark tones and rich wooden floors creating the perfect setting for listening to records and enjoying the company of others.

The menu features an à la carte menu of 12 cocktails, artistically presented on custom record sleeves that will rotate biannually. Starting from $19, the collection offers traditional and innovative offerings mimicking the selections of a record store, providing guests the opportunity to return to the comfort of classics or explore newer, more adventurous possibilities. Examples include the White Ferrari, named after the Frank Ocean song. It is a take on the classic Vesper martini, which goes all the way in terms of high spirits, combining mezcal, tequila, Japanese plum liqueur and smoked pineapple. A white Negroni dubbed Imaginary Players (after Jay-Z) is made with *shōchū*, gin, blanco vermouth, strawberry sherry and a raspberry eau-de-vie. Nights Over Egypt (The Jones Girls) is a riff on a New York sour, with tasting notes of a parfait created by combining bourbon, calvados, yogurt, Bordeaux and seasonal fruit syrup. The frothy drink is served with a granola cookie to mimic the crunchy garnish.

Other Press Club pleasures include French Waltz, which swirls pisco and green Chartreuse in a dance romanticized by Kabinett Riesling and a dash of lime. Temptation plays with chenin blanc, mango and lime, with the devilish addition of blanco tequila. A surprising concoction of cognac, rye, strawberry and amontillado steeped in cacao nibs and shaken creates Devil in a New Dress, a revelation to be savored without reservation as it is destined to become a house signature. It was a favorite, leaving an indelible memory. But the true must-have is In a Cadillac, a favorite of Patton and Kennedy's, a set of dueling martinis named after an OutKast song, savored side by side. One is vodka with Junmai Daiginjo sake, *shiso* and blanco vermouth, and the other features gin, Palo Cortado sherry, blanco vermouth and grapefruit. All drinks are ideal alongside snacks such as The Onion, a chef-driven version of Outback Steakhouse's Bloomin' Onion with ranch and a side of caviar.

FROM ABOVE What Have You Done for Me Lately cocktail, with Don Julio *reposado*, Mr. Black coffee liqueur and jalapeño agave; interior

IMAGES **RAY LOPEZ**

BEST FOR

Disconnecting and chilling. The setting is perfect, with exceptional drinks, snacks and music to make anyone happy.

VERDICT

Every visit to Press Club is unique. The staff gets to know their clientele, with off-the-cuff surprises, evolving drink menus and special musical theme nights. And if there is something you would like, all you have to do is ask.
pressclubdc.com

The Season's Best Lightweight Check-In Bags

Capacity meets construction in these five products

SAVVY CONVENTIONEERS follow two cardinal rules: In anticipation of the samples and swag you're sure to collect at a trade show—baseball caps, candles, phone chargers, commemorative books you actually want to keep, and other promotional bric-a-brac—you should arrive at your destination with checked luggage filled to no more than 60-percent capacity. Of equal importance, and to further prevent issues during your return check-in at the airport, never spend an inordinate percentage of your checked-bag weight limit on the suitcase itself. Whether your airline per-piece baggage allowance is 50 or 70 pounds (the latter a cherished perk among business-class passengers and frequent fliers), kicking off your trip with a suitcase that already weighs 17 pounds or more when empty seems wasteful at best. (This is also useful advice for any vacation to a destination teeming with coveted souvenirs—Italian ceramics and French wine immediately spring to mind.)

That's why we went in search of check-in bags that offer an ideal combination of bountiful capacity and construction that's equal parts tough and lightweight. Ultimately, any one of these suitcases will fit the bill during your next trip, while also minimizing anticipatory stress when you're hoisting it onto the luggage scale at the check-in desk.

July Checked

With its brushed-aluminum bumpers at every corner, July luggage never fails to exude a vibe that's decidedly sleek and modern. This Checked style—in a recently released Toffee shade—weighs just 8.3 pounds, while its details are wholly thoughtful, from interior linings that are both waterproof and stainproof to an integrated TSA lock, included laundry bag, the brand's Y-strap compression system and a telescoping handle that offers 20 height variations to ensure each user can roll through the airport at the ideal comfort level. The piece can be monogrammed for an additional $50, while a transparent mesh cover retails for $45 for exterior protection. ***$375, at july.com***

Airs Large Expandable Check-In

A recent entry in the luggage market, Airs is an upstart brand that puts an emphasis on matching your suitcase style to your personality. Though they are offered in 20 color options—from pastels for "Happy" to hues that include magenta for "Electric" or a '70s-inspired stripe on white for "Retro"—the common element across these hard-shell cases is a set of signature red wheels with 360-degree capability. The white Large Expandable Check-In case seen here is from the "Achiever" group and measures 29.5 inches tall and weighs roughly 10.5 pounds. Interior details include expandable compartments and compression straps. The three sizes currently available in all colors are sold individually or as a three-piece set that, with the large bag seen here, also includes a medium-sized check-in and a carry-on style. ***$298, at airs-travel.com***

STORY BY
LAURIE BROOKINS

Samsonite UpLIFT Softside Medium Spinner

Consider a soft-side bag, which tends to be more lightweight than hard-shell cases. This UpLIFT Softside Medium Spinner by Samsonite, a recent debut, stands 27.75 inches high while weighing only 7.7 pounds. It also offers a feel-good element: The body fabric (seen here in Elemental Blue) is crafted of 100-percent postconsumer PET bottles, thus imbuing your choice of suitcase with a sustainable element. Details include spinner wheels, a pair of gusseted front zipper pockets, and, in addition to a multi-stop telescoping handle, top and side handles crafted with extra padding for ease of carrying when rolling isn't possible. Inside you'll find compression straps, a zippered lining pocket, mesh pocket that's also accessible from one of the front panels, and removable wet pouch for liquids.

$229.99, at samsonite.com

Arlo Skye Zipper Check-In Large

Like Airs, Arlo Skye's Zipper Check-In Large weighs in at 10.5 pounds, but it also offers among the largest capacities in this group, an exceedingly roomy 99.5 liters (the preferred volume measurement for luggage capacity). Arlo Skye also recently launched chic new colors, including Champagne and the Sea Sage seen here. The exterior of the Zipper Check-In Large is crafted of impact-resistant polycarbonate that's lightly textured to minimize scratches, while its proprietary FreeFlex construction allows the user to overpack without stressing the zipper during closure. Interior details include split compartments with zipped pockets and an antimicrobial lining.

$450, at arloskye.com

Quince Expandable Check-In Hard Shell Suitcase

For the largest of its four available luggage sizes, San Francisco-based lifestyle brand Quince offers a roomy Check-In Hard Shell Suitcase that weighs 10.2 pounds and accommodates a 99-liter capacity, in classic colors including navy, wine, olive and the tan seen here. The interior features multiple compartments for organization, a compression panel, and a removable laundry bag. The hard-shell polycarbonate exterior, meanwhile, offers a TSA-approved lock, aluminum telescoping handle, zipper that allows the bag to expand an additional inch, and spinner wheels crafted by Hinomoto, a Japanese brand favored among frequent travelers for their smooth operation and durability. For $49.90, purchase the six-piece group of Eco Compression Packing Cubes to create a matched set that maximizes space.

$425, at quince.com

FROM OUR PARTNERS

AWAY

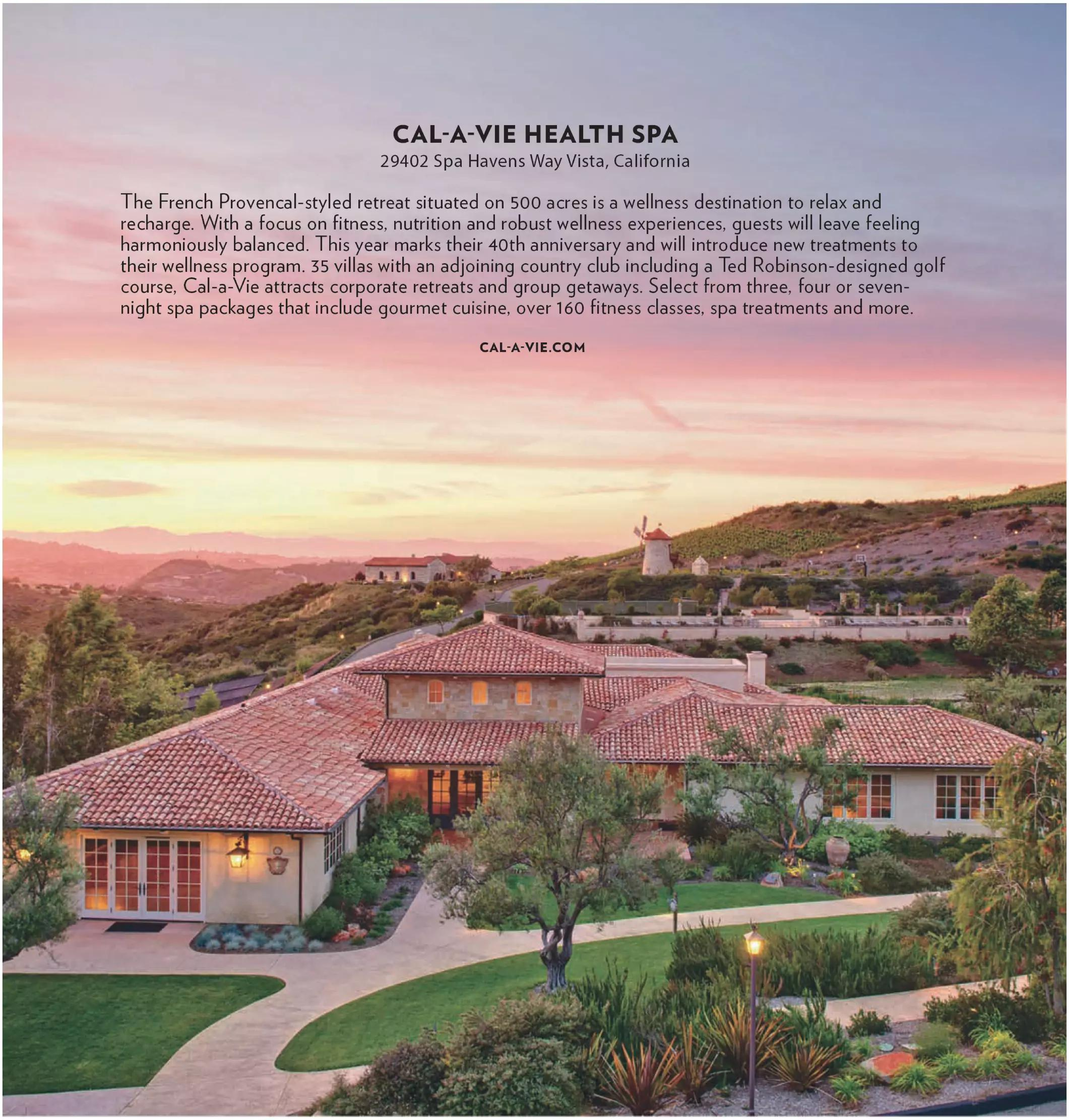
MAGMA RESORT SANTORINI

Vourvoulos 847 00, Greece

Located on Santorini's northeastern coast, this Grecian idyllic hideaway is comprised of 59 guestrooms and 24 suites fitted with verandas and private plunges. From a sleek infinity pool to endless views of the Aegean Sea, the property is a haven for wellness seekers offering a range of holistic experiences inspired by its volcanic and natural setting. The resort makes it easy to connect with Santorini's offerings, including sunrise hikes to Ancient Thera, trips to family-owned vineyards or privately arranged kayak tours. Experience the flavours of Greece at new restaurant Magma Soul, serving meat, fish and local delicacies.

HYATT.COM

Photos courtesy of Magma Resort Santorini



CAL-A-VIE HEALTH SPA

29402 Spa Havens Way Vista, California

The French Provencal-styled retreat situated on 500 acres is a wellness destination to relax and recharge. With a focus on fitness, nutrition and robust wellness experiences, guests will leave feeling harmoniously balanced. This year marks their 40th anniversary and will introduce new treatments to their wellness program. 35 villas with an adjoining country club including a Ted Robinson-designed golf course, Cal-a-Vie attracts corporate retreats and group getaways. Select from three, four or seven-night spa packages that include gourmet cuisine, over 160 fitness classes, spa treatments and more.

CAL-A-VIE.COM

Photos courtesy of Cal-a-Vie Health Spa

STORY BY
EDEN HERBSTMAN

PLEASURE SEEKER

This month, comedian Chelsea Handler has much to celebrate: a 50th birthday and a new book, aptly titled *I'll Have What She's Having*. "I have a really good time being myself with a lot of conviction and gained self-awareness. The book is a dose of optimism." She's also having a good time traveling, from seaside getaways to safaris. "I love an airport lounge. American Airlines always wants me to go to the Chelsea Lounge, obviously, but the Soho Lounge is the cream of the crop." Here, her treasured travels.

Biarritz, France

"It's like a 1970s surfing village. Biarrtiz is *the* place. If I didn't have a home in Mallorca, I would get one here. It's so French and sexy. The food is great, and Hôtel du Palais Biarritz is a beautiful old hotel. The water is swimmable, surfable and wraps around the coast. It's very luxe and has this old-world charm. It's got F. Scott Fitzgerald all over it."

Africa

"Africa is the trip of a lifetime. Botswana and Kenya are the most beautiful places I've ever been. If you took away the snakes I would probably live in Africa. In Tanzania I saw hippos in the Mara River and lions mating. I love animals—I could watch them all day."

Whistler, Canada

"I've been going for 15 years and just bought a ski chalet. I'm very passionate about skiing, and Whistler has all the ingredients of European skiing. Skiing is a great family sport. You're moving all day, having great food and in bed by eight o'clock."

Mallorca, Spain

"I have a house in Port de Sóller, and I can walk across the street and get in the Mediterranean—which I've done on several occasions. I do tons of e-biking there. Mallorca is mountainous and dramatic. I love the tapas and paella, any food that can be shared. Ca's Patró March is the best—they have beautiful fish, fried onion rings and sangria."

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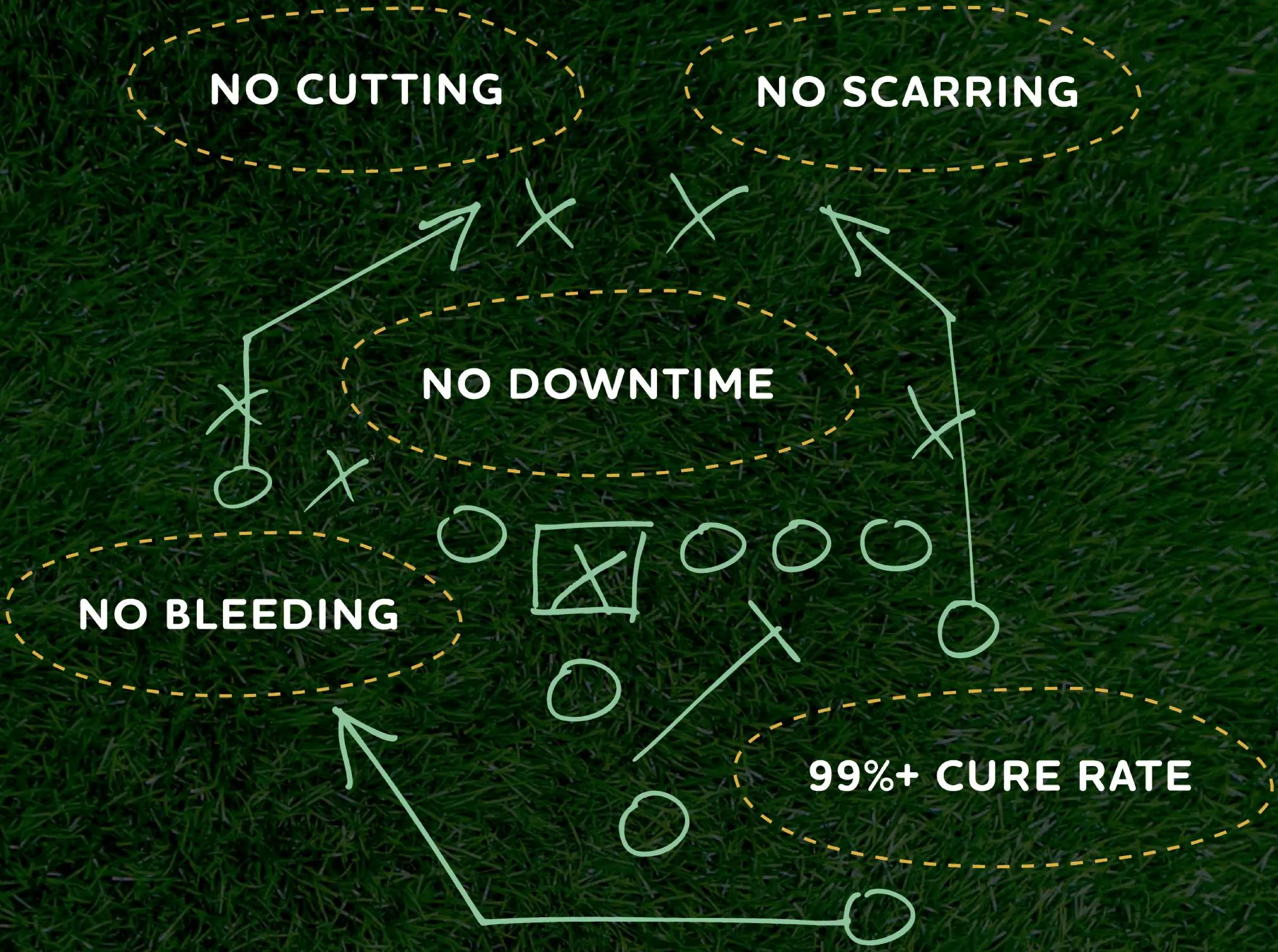

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